



This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

**MacIntyre and green political thought:  
deliberative eco-politics for dependent rational  
animals**

Adam Simcock

Keele University

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2018



## Acknowledgements

A great debt of thanks is owed to a great number of people who, in many different ways, have supported me throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisors Sherilyn MacGregor and Andrew Dobson for their generous encouragement, guidance, and time over the years.

I would like to thank John Barry and Brian Doherty for giving me the opportunity to talk through, debate and rework the ideas within the thesis with them and for their clear and constructive feedback in doing so. Likewise, I would also like to thank John Horton for his constructive comments on an earlier draft of the thesis. Again, I would also like to take the opportunity to re-thank Sherilyn MacGregor for her unwavering and invaluable time and support in supervising me from Manchester University over the last few years. Any mistakes or omissions here in are my own.

The ideas for the thesis originally began to form during my study at the University of Edinburgh and I would like to thank Elizabeth Bomberg, and Tim Hayward, for introducing me to the study of green politics. I would also like to thank Annis May Timpson, latterly of the Centre of Canadian Studies at Edinburgh, for introducing me to the politics of First Nations protest in the Canadian context and giving me the opportunity to hear directly from some of those people about their experiences back in 2005. It is their voice, to which this work cannot do justice, but that sparked my concern to look to green politics as a source of hope.

Chapter 7 was presented at the MANCEPT conference at Manchester University in the autumn of 2017 and I would like to thank Anna Wienhues for giving me the opportunity to present and for convening the relating to nature sessions. Thanks also go to the participants for their constructive deliberation and feedback.

I would also like to thank the students and staff of Leek High School who have been nothing but an encouragement to me throughout the process over the last eight years. Thanks, in particular go to, John Spencer, Phill Evans, Jo Garcia and Gary Bartram for giving me the opportunity to both teach and continue my research in an environment that so readily demonstrates the virtues of care and inclusion.

Thanks go to my family and friends who have continually had to try to explain what I have been doing over the years and who have backed me every single step of the way.

And lastly - thank you to my wife Gar-Ling and the pups, Nanuq and Karou, who have kept me going at all times and for reminding me why I write this thesis.

## **Abstract**

Ecologism is a political ideology that emerged in the 1970s. It challenged the neoliberal privileging of economic growth over environmental protection and a narrow conception of the self as autonomous, rational and self-interested. Ecologism's normative challenge has grown quiet as it became perceived as too inward looking and focused on the self, rather than engaged with issues such as climate change that now preoccupy green political thought. However, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, neoliberalism now dominates western democracies. This turn away from the self and normative opposition to neoliberalism has clearly not furthered the environmental cause, and so there is a need to return to re-politicise the ontological arguments of ecologism.

A small number of green political theorists have begun to look towards the Thomistic Aristotelianism of Alasdair MacIntyre and this thesis seeks to add to their number. I argue that MacIntyre's work concerning the self as dependent rational animal, and arguments for the political and social structures that support this self, can be used to affirm and reengage ecological arguments with politics. MacIntyre's thought moves ecologism away from its "inward-turn", concerned with the self's personal experience of the environment, to a collective politics that looks outwardly to challenge the dominant neoliberal order.

In bringing ecologism into conversation with MacIntyre's philosophy, the original contribution I offer ecological political theory is two-fold. Firstly, the virtues of acknowledged dependence can be used to reflect substantive concern for the environment within political deliberation. Secondly, I develop MacIntyre's conception of localized deliberative democracy. In order to counter claims that such localization is naïve, I bring MacIntyre's ideal into conversation with Murray Bookchin's model of municipal libertarianism and consider two real world examples: Rojava in northern Syria and the 'Idle no More movement' in Canada. These examples offer

hopeful evidence that decentralised deliberative politics, starting from acknowledging our dependence, can oppose the hegemony of neoliberalism both socially and ecologically.

# Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
MacIntyre and Green Political thought.....	3
Situating the thesis.....	6
Communitarianism and Ecologism.....	8
Shared concerns: why a synthesis?.....	11
Outline of the thesis.....	15
<b>Chapter 1 .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Preparing the ground: The self and the good in ecologism .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Introduction.....	20
Part One: The concept of the self in ecologism .....	23
Arne Naess: The concept of the expansive self.....	25
Warwick Fox: The transpersonal self .....	28
Freya Mathews: the ecological self.....	33
Part Two: The concept of the good in ecologism.....	38
Robert Goodin: The good of nature as context.....	39
John Barry: Normative sustainability as ‘the good’ .....	43
Conclusion .....	48
<b>Chapter 2 .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>What’s wrong with liberalism? Communitarian and green perspectives on liberalism and neoliberalism .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Introduction.....	51
Part One: What’s wrong with liberalism? Deontology and neutrality .....	54
Is liberalism necessarily against the green good life? .....	64
Neoliberalism .....	67
Part Two: Communitarianism and Ecologism .....	74



Communitarianism and the relational self .....	75
Communitarianism and a politics of the common good.....	78
Communitarian critique of neoliberalism .....	80
Conclusion .....	84
<b>Chapter 3.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Eckersley's Place based Eco-Communitarianism.....</b>	<b>86</b>
Introduction .....	86
Robyn Eckersley's eco-communitarianism.....	88
Eckersley's example of the ecological self .....	96
Some concerns with Eckersley's approach .....	98
Conclusion .....	102
<b>Chapter 4.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>MacIntyre: Acknowledging Dependence.....</b>	<b>103</b>
Introduction .....	103
Introducing MacIntyre's argument .....	103
Dependent Rational Animals.....	107
Animals and goods .....	112
The networks of the self.....	116
Acknowledging nature in politics: A two-sided relationship .....	118
The relationships of the dependent rational animal .....	121
The virtues of acknowledged dependence and just generosity .....	123
The political and social structures of the common good.....	124
Conclusion .....	129
<b>Chapter 5.....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Deliberative democracy in ecologism and green political thought.....</b>	<b>132</b>
Introduction .....	132
The tension between ecologism and deliberative democracy .....	134

Moving towards democracy.....	135
Green ends and democracy.....	138
Connecting ecologism and democracy.....	142
Towards a deliberative democracy of the common good .....	145
Deliberative democracy .....	147
The design of deliberative forums.....	150
Green goals and deliberation .....	153
Conclusion .....	156
<b>Chapter 6 .....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Deliberation and Acknowledged Dependence .....</b>	<b>158</b>
Introduction.....	158
Citizenship and deliberation.....	159
MacIntyre, deliberative politics and the virtues of acknowledged dependence .....	168
Representation in deliberation .....	176
Conclusion .....	181
<b>Chapter 7: .....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>The Missing Green Politics of MacIntyre.....</b>	<b>183</b>
Introduction.....	183
Part One: The Missing Politics of Acknowledged Dependence.....	186
MacIntyre’s negative view of the state .....	186
MacIntyre’s argument for deliberative politics.....	192
Part Two: A critique of MacIntyre’s view of the state .....	198
In defence of MacIntyre’s view of the state.....	202
In defence of a politics of the local community .....	206
Part Three: Realising a politics of acknowledged dependence .....	210
Acknowledging dependence through Libertarian Municipalism .....	212
Rojava and Democratic Confederalism .....	217

Tar Sands protests in Northern America.....	220
Conclusion.....	224
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>227</b>
MacIntyre and green political thought .....	227
MacIntyre, ecologism and ontology.....	232
MacIntyre, ecologism and deliberative democracy .....	235
What insights does MacIntyre offer ecologism?.....	238
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>243</b>

## Introduction

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as western democracies moved into a post-industrial phase, ecologism emerged as the principle form of green political thought. Ecologism advocates fundamental changes between people and the natural world in order to move towards a more 'sustainable and fulfilling experience' (Dobson 2008:3). Within ecologism there was a strong philosophical current of ecocentrism. Philosophers such as Arne Naess, Warwick Fox and Freya Mathews, argued for a conception of the human self that encompassed human nature relations as constitutive of the self and argued for a biocentric egalitarianism based on the notion that humans and non-humans were intrinsically valuable. They developed a conception of the environment as constituted through myriad interrelated and unfolding entities and thus more than a mere material resource base for human appropriation, consumption or disposal (see Naess 1989, Fox 1994, Mathews 1995). Concurrently, green theorists and activists such as Murray Bookchin argued for radically decentralised forms of democracy to counter the hierarchical structure of neoliberal states (Bookchin 1989). This was a position also adopted by Die Grünen party in Germany from the beginning of the 1980s.

From the early 2000s onwards there has been a distinct shift away from such ontological and normative arguments in green political thought to a focus on specific environmental problems such as climate change (Blühdorn 2004:20). Part of the reason for this shift may have been that ecologism was seen as inward looking, in some ways almost spiritual rather than political, and focused on individual value change. These eco-centric arguments were seemingly unable to present political solutions to emerging and urgent problems, whilst Bookchin's libertarian municipal ideals, concerning local deliberative assemblies and control over the economy, seemed too radical as consensus gathered around global capitalism. Within political theory more generally, arguments have grown anti-foundational and postmodern in form, reluctant to deal with ontological questions concerning the nature of the self. Meanwhile, the

human exceptionalist world-view that ecologism was critical of has entrenched itself through the ascendance of neoliberal economic, political, and social practices.

Some have argued that a move away from the ontological arguments of ecologism is necessary because of their concern that such arguments were essentialist and theorists wished to avoid imposing universalist claims to truth on a fluid and diverse world (see Blühdorn 2004:38). Rather than abandon the ontological arguments of ecologism, however, I contend that there is a need to revisit them. Debates about different ways of seeing and engaging with the world are as relevant – perhaps even more relevant - now than they were at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ontological and normative arguments concerning human nature relationships should be advocated in order to keep open the possibility of alternative ways of thinking about ourselves, and interacting with our environments, in the face of a hegemonic neoliberalism. If the problem was that the eco-centric arguments of ecologism were too inward looking, then perhaps it should look out again to reconnect with collective political concerns and challenge the dominance of neoliberalism over political thought and practice. Likewise, it is necessary to advocate those decentred deliberative structures proposed within ecologism to keep alive the possibility of alternative ways of relating to nature, other than as manna for human disposal, and to re-enfranchise people in making decisions about their environment.

Criticism of neoliberalism and its role in social and ecological problems has been a fundamental concern for many political traditions.<sup>1</sup> Both communitarianism and ecologism share the concern that neoliberal political thought is problematic in some crucial ways. For communitarians, neoliberalism is neglectful of the communal ties that sustain individuals and enable their autonomy and meaningful participation in democracy (see MacIntyre 1994, Taylor 1992, Sandel 1998 for example). For ecologism, neoliberalism entails anthropocentric (human

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term neoliberalism throughout the thesis to refer to the ideology and practice in which market principles such as economic growth and capital accumulation are increasingly applied to politics, economics and society, in western democracies. I will also use the term to encompass deontological liberalism within political thought which is closely related in its assumption that individuals are self-interested, self-determined, preference satisfiers, distinct from social bonds. In chapter 2 I will cover the use of this term in ecologism and communitarian thought in more detail.

centred), narrow self-interest, and a short termism in respect to human treatment of the environment that is socially and environmentally destructive (see Naess 1989, Mathews 1995, Goodin 1992, Fox 1994, Eckersley 2004 for example). This is particularly the case where it comes to the pervasiveness of neoliberal practices in governance that promote consumption and economic growth, often at the expense of the environment. From both communitarian and ecological perspectives there is a need to continue to challenge the dominant neoliberal understanding of the individual, and individual duties and responsibilities to the community and environment, within liberal democracies. Correspondingly there is also a need to challenge neoliberal socio-economic practices that detach the economy from society and treat nature purely as resource.

### ***MacIntyre and Green Political thought***

Challenging liberal individualism and its expression in neoliberalism is needed, but what is the best way to mount such a challenge? In this thesis, I argue that Alasdair MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelian thought, associated with the communitarian cannon, can provide key conceptual resources for justifying more ecologically sensitive outcomes from democratic procedures. MacIntyre draws on the philosophy of Aristotle particularly in reference to notions such as the good life and the essential telos (ends) or nature of people. He does so through the lens of Thomas Aquinas who developed Aristotle's ideas about virtues as dispositions of character that enable a person to pursue the good life. MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelianism is also informed by his early Marxist interpretations and then by his endeavours to move towards a more humanist Marxism in the wake of revelations such as the Stalinist purges of the USSR. As such, MacIntyre's thought is very diverse and covers both ethics and politics.<sup>2</sup> His *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (1999) is a key text that informs my engagement with MacIntyre.

---

<sup>2</sup>For a full treatment of what Kelvin Knight terms MacIntyre's 'revolutionary Aristotelianism' his book entitled *Aristotelian philosophy* and, in particular, the substantive chapter, *A Revolutionary Aristotelianism* is an excellent place to begin (see Knight 2007).

In the book he seeks to sketch out the implications of correcting Aristotle's mistake of occluding human's essential vulnerabilities in political and ethical thought. His work on the notion of the self as dependent and the virtues associated with pursuing the good life contained within *Dependent Rational Animals* are important concepts for green political thought. However, in the final chapter I will also situate his suggestions concerning the self as dependent in terms of his wider Aristotelian moral, ethical and political philosophy; in particular his views on the acquisition of the virtues and deliberation.

There are only a few green theorists who have engaged with MacIntyre in their work. In a 2009 article Andrew Dobson considers MacIntyre's notion of dependence for thinking about the self in political theory. Gideon Calder offers a succinct examination of proxies to represent environmental concerns (Calder 2009). In *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability: Human Flourishing in a Climate-Changed, Carbon Constrained World*, John Barry examines the implications of MacIntyre's notions of vulnerability and dependence for green politics in developing a green civic republicanism. Barry's 2013 article about MacIntyre and Václav Havel considers their commonalities as courageous and dissident thinkers who offer a non-arrogant humanism to green political thought. In his book, *Freedom and Environment: Autonomy, Human Flourishing and the Political Philosophy of Sustainability*, Michael Hannis develops an ecological virtue of acknowledged dependence (2016). These works have broken important ground in considering the relevance of MacIntyre's notion of the virtues of acknowledged dependence for green political thought. Aside from these examples there has been limited sustained engagement with the MacIntyre's thought from a green perspective.

My engagement with MacIntyre builds on these works but extends the analysis onto new ground. I argue that there are three concepts from MacIntyre's thought that are very useful for greens: i) an embedded and inter-relational conception of the self, ii) the virtues of acknowledged dependence, and iii) decentralized and deliberative political and economic structures that allow selves to acknowledge and express their inescapable dependence on their environment. Developing an approach to politics that incorporates these three components together represents

an environmental ‘third way’ in that it is neither strongly biocentric, supposing that nature has intrinsic value independently of humans, nor is it arrogantly anthropocentric, in the sense that the environment is regarded as having value primarily as a collection of commodities for human consumption. This approach advocates an ‘enlightened anthropocentrism’ in which human valuers acknowledge their interdependence with both other people and their environments. By bringing MacIntyre’s important insights into ecologism, I intend to demonstrate that there are significant areas of overlap which can bolster the arguments of ecologism and add to an alternative conception of political thought. A conception that challenges the more socially and ecologically destructive elements of neoliberalism -- both ontologically *and* politically.

I argue that MacIntyre’s concept of ‘*acknowledged dependence*’ can be a useful way for ecologism to think about how to generate green outcomes when constructing their own conceptions of democratic practice. By ‘green outcomes’ I mean the many objectives of ensuring that both humans and nature continue to flourish.<sup>3</sup> Such objectives include the questioning of economic growth as the overall objective of society and consideration that other measures, such as wellbeing, should be seriously considered alongside this measure.

For reasons I explain herein, I shall contend that MacIntyre’s thought is suggestive of a decentralised politics in which interdependence can be brought to bear on influencing collective political decision making. However, it requires development to fill in his “missing” green politics. This is because his political argument in *Dependent Rational Animals* goes so far as to suggest looking at local and historic examples of communities in which the virtues of acknowledged dependence were nurtured and expressed but little beyond this (1999:143). By drawing on some of MacIntyre’s other work and insights from green political thought and practice it is possible to develop a conception of politics that is both deliberative- and so offers individuals the chance to

---

<sup>3</sup>I take here MacIntyre’s broad definition of the term flourishing as living well of *Bene vivere* (MacIntyre 1999:65). The broad nature of the term flourishing is what makes it a contested and therefore political term for debate and deliberation (as with nature above). MacIntyre’s understanding of the term flourishing is one of living well but what it is to live well will be different for different individuals, groups and species at different times. What is key is that greens are enabled in presenting and framing their arguments such that our collective conception of living well can take onboard concerns about our human and nature interrelations such as gender domination and the domination of nature.



express and learn from each other's interdependencies, and local- such that people can recognise these interdependencies as shared concerns and meaningfully affect change within those communities. In acknowledging their interdependencies and broadening the notion of interdependence to include our environmental interdependencies it is then possible to think of a politics and economic practice that is more sensitive to our environments than that of neoliberalism. Such a conception stands in direct opposition to the managerialism of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism precludes individuals from shaping the collective character of their society, whilst itself promoting a narrow form of individualism and a conception of nature as property for consumption and use in economic growth.

MacIntyre's conception of politics as a form of localised deliberation is echoed by the libertarian municipalism of Murray Bookchin in which decentralised deliberative assemblies are the locus of decision making. Importantly for both, the local is also the site at which economic activity can be re-embedded and given back to individuals to be reshaped. In such a way, it is possible to counterbalance the overarching global metabolism and hierarchy of neoliberalism that is often very abstract from individuals and thus difficult to question or to modify. In my view, hope for a politics of acknowledged dependence can be found in the examples of Rojava in northern Syria and the 'Idle No More Movement' in Canada, amongst other possible examples, in which local deliberative forms of democracy embody counter-hegemonic practices and more enlightened human-environment relations.

### ***Situating the thesis***

In order to situate my interpretation of MacIntyre's relevance for ecologism, I wish to briefly pick up on Hannis's and Barry's key insights from MacIntyre's work before responding to them principally, and more fully, in the penultimate chapter of the thesis. Both Barry (2012, 2013) and Hannis (2016) have engaged with MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals* and, like myself, they note the desirability of bringing MacIntyre's concepts and virtues of dependence, into green

political thought. Hannis develops MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelian approach to argue in favour of virtues of acknowledged ecological dependence and sees these virtues as a way of framing an ecologically sensitive orientation to nature (Hannis 2016:13). He proceeds to then argue that this virtue-based approach should be applied through government policies, 'directed at ecological sustainability' (Hannis 2016:167). Whilst I concur with the aim of greening government policy, and whilst Hannis defends this move in terms of, 'the protection of freedom' (Hannis 2016:167), I present a different argument for the way in which these virtues are developed and the way in which they are practiced for two reasons. Firstly, MacIntyre's conception of the virtues of acknowledged dependence relies on the development of local face to face practices, such as learning truthfulness or acknowledging someone else's particular circumstances (See MacIntyre 1999:130). Secondly, and from MacIntyre's own perspective, the character of communities is best shaped by those participating in them. For MacIntyre there are long standing reasons within his thought for this to be the case; chief amongst these is his concern to avoid the managerialism of the neoliberal or socialist state over individuals and to see politics as the business of people by themselves and for themselves (MacIntyre 1999:131). The form of politics required both to develop and to practice the virtues of acknowledged ecological dependence are then deliberative in nature and local in form.

John Barry develops the key insight that MacIntyre's notion, that the self is fundamentally vulnerable and dependent on others, can have a positively disruptive effect on dominant assumptions that individuals within western societies are immune from reaching biological limitations (see Barry 2012:45). In developing these insights, Barry constructs a green conception of civic republicanism. Although he is critical of MacIntyre's apparent 'anti-industrial tendencies' and focus on 'parochial' forms of life, he notes that, 'there is much in MacIntyre's localist vision which does have merit and is compatible, in a reworked form ... with key aspects of a green political vision' (Barry 2013:52-53). It is the job of the penultimate chapter in this thesis to

demonstrate that MacIntyre's vision can be reworked to both social and green ends, and that there is indeed much for greens in his suggestions for localist forms of deliberative politics.

Like Barry, I also wish to acknowledge from the outset that, in drawing significant attention to the fact of our human vulnerabilities and dependencies, MacIntyre's work bears resemblance to the works of ecofeminist theorists such as Plumwood (1993) and MacGregor (2006) amongst others (see Barry 2012). These works see the self as 'embodied and embedded' in ecological relationships and human beings as inevitably dependent on the caring labour of others (Mellor 1997). They share a similar train of argument with MacIntyre in that they are critical of dominant modes of thinking which deny this embedded human condition, or which see dependence as a weakness to be transcended, disregarded and juxtaposed negatively to masculine culture and rationality. MacIntyre himself acknowledges that feminist theorists have highlighted the significance of dependence in, '...their understanding of the connections between blindness to and denigration of women and male attempts to ignore the facts of dependence...' (MacIntyre 1999:3). Thus, I see much in MacIntyre's arguments that is complementary to the perspectives of ecofeminists particularly in bringing together concepts such as rationality and dependence. And whilst his localist vision of politics requires some defence from the dangers of paternalism or parochialism, I feel that MacIntyre's arguments deserve significant attention from green political theorists, particularly in their promise for "re-politicising" ecologism.

### ***Communitarianism and Ecologism***

The scholarly fields of communitarianism and green political theory are large and diverse, and it is part of the task of the first part of the thesis to map their contours. By way of introduction, it is important to state that I broadly follow Andrew Dobson's definition of 'ecologism' as a political theory which proposes, 'fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption' (Dobson 2000:2). In *Green Political Thought* (2000), he places ecologism in opposition to 'environmentalism', which he claims seeks to mitigate environmental damage

without proposing political change or questioning the underlying assumptions about consumption, economic growth and narrow individualism of liberal capitalism. This understanding of ecologism leads me to the work of eco-centric philosophers, such as Arne Naess and Freya Mathews, who challenge dominant anthropocentric social and political understandings of the relationship between individuals and their environments. I situate them alongside green political theorists, such as John Barry and Robyn Eckersley, who develop immanent challenges to existing political structures and theories. I observe that their approaches are similar to a communitarian approach, and in some cases, they draw upon communitarian thinkers when critiquing neoliberal capitalism and its political structures and social practices.

Communitarianism, like green political thought, is also a broad church of ideas. In this thesis, I broadly follow Mulhall and Swift's (1996) definition of communitarianism as a standpoint with a particular *ontological* view of the individual as embedded within communities of language and practice contra the liberal atomistic self. In outlining the importance of ontology in political thought in general, Colin Hay describes ontology as: 'The nature of the human (political) subject and its behavioural motivations' (Hay 2013:50). Hay argues that, 'our ontological choices- whether acknowledged or unacknowledged- have profound epistemological, methodological and practical political consequences' (Hay 2013:3). Hay is critical of the divide between those focused on ontology and those focused on analysis and calls for a middle way to be found between the two whereby ontological argument should 'counterbalance' the central assumptions of the 'mainstream' (See Hay 2013:16). I argue that it is necessary to utilise an ontological theory, as ecologism and communitarianism do, in order to challenge existing understandings about how the self relates to other selves and their environments. However, I shall also argue that it is necessary for ontological arguments about embedded selves to connect with political arguments about the best way to make and act upon decisions about the environment. I contend that eco-centric thinkers should adopt MacIntyre's ontological understanding of selves as fundamentally interdependent, as well as advocating this ontological argument, over and against a deontological liberalism, which eco-centric thinkers and communitarians alike have found problematic. Using

communitarian ontology as an example, Daniel Bell describes ontological argument as having at its core, 'questions concerning what factors you will invoke to account for social life' and that, 'the communitarian idea is that "society" is ultimate in order of explanation – whether we like it or not, whether we know it or not, we're deeply bound up in the social world in which we happen to find ourselves' (Bell 1995:31).

Focusing on an eco-centric ontology Alan Carter argues that an interrelated ontology, 'by focusing on the interrelations between the parts, invites us to see how we are related to others' (Carter 1999:345). For Carter, the implications of such an ontology are that 'it invites us to ask ourselves how our actions affect others, how others interrelate with each other, and how their actions affect us' (1999:345). Those who advocate ontological arguments, in particular, communitarians and eco-centric thinkers, argue that it is important to describe the nature of the self as part of the premises of a political theory. This is because they, like Hay above, argue that the nature of the self in political theory establishes the parameters and possibilities for further reasoning about political institutions, norms and behaviours.

This communitarian view of the relationship between the self and society is in stark contrast to dominant political thinking in deontological liberalism characterised in large part by the work of John Rawls (superseding the work of classical liberalism in thinkers such as Kant). This deontological work seeks to establish political theory and practice without reference to a particular notion of the self. Mulhall and Swift characterise deontological liberalism thus: 'deontological liberalism is distinctive in also standing opposed to teleology on a foundational or meta-ethical level in that it derives those unqualified duties and prohibitions in a way that does not presuppose any final human purposes or ends, or any determinate conception of the good life for human beings' (Mulhall and Swift 2000:42). Such a position, against the use of ontology, is taken in the liberal spirit of generating a political system that can accommodate differing beliefs and views. Deontological approaches tend to avoid reference to the good life and what it means to live well. Choices about the good life are a matter for individuals to choose as individuals and not matters of public deliberation and ascent.

Drawing on Mulhall and Swift's characterisation of communitarianism, I use the themes of the ontological conception of the self and the status of the good in politics to group together the essential areas of communitarianism. I argue that these themes overlap, and are compatible, with ecologism. I shall also argue that communitarianism, and here I refer to Alasdair MacIntyre in particular, and some wider areas of green political thought, also share conceptual ground in their advocacy of decentralised deliberation in order to challenge the unsustainable, or communally corrosive, practices that exist in most democratic contexts. Importantly, and as examined later in the thesis, MacIntyre is the sole voice within communitarianism advocating decentralised, deliberative, communities. In doing so, he differentiates himself from communitarians who argue for state centred or republican alternatives to neoliberal individualism.

### ***Shared concerns: why a synthesis?***

The communitarian thinker Michael Sandel's comments during his final BBC Reith lecture in 2009 illustrate a core argument of many eco-centric and non-liberal green political theorists. This is that, in order to re-orientate the relationship of individuals within modern liberal democratic states to nature, and to be more sustainable than at present, there is a need to move beyond market mechanisms dealing with environmental problems which place an exclusively monetary value on nature:

Consider the environment. If the countries of the world are able to change patterns of energy use and bring about a meaningful reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, it will not be because emissions trading schemes allow countries to buy and sell the right to pollute. Market mechanisms can be useful instruments. But real change will depend on changing people's attitudes toward nature, and rethinking our responsibilities toward the planet we share. This is a moral and spiritual project, not only an economic one (Sandel 2009:10).

Sandel's point – shared by many greens and eco-centric thinkers- is that the reduction of nature's plural meanings, entities and values to this one value reduces nature's status to that of capital, a material resource to be bought and sold for human use.<sup>4</sup> The absolute dominance of this categorisation of nature as capital is, for ecologism, at the heart of environmentally-destructive practices within and across modern states. The change towards a more sustainable relationship will come, Sandel argues, when people's attitudes towards nature change, and he believes that this change cannot be brought about by the market alone but will involve a change in moral and spiritual perspective. The view that Sandel expresses here seems emblematic of eco-centric and some wider green political ideas.

In this thesis, I seek to contribute to the existing intellectual project that is animated by the question of what ecologism can learn conceptually from other political theories. There is a significant amount of work, carried out over the last two decades, that examines the engagement and connections between ecologism and other political theories such as liberalism, socialism, feminism and conservatism (see Dobson and Eckersley eds 2006 for example). My contribution to these efforts lies in developing and making a case for a synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's work. In particular, this synthesis takes place in the context of documented tensions between some of the core principles of neoliberalism and communitarianism as well as between ecologism and neoliberalism. As can be seen from the comments above, there are indications that a coming-together of communitarianism and ecologism is a possibility.

The potential synthesis between communitarianism and ecologism has been explored by Robyn Eckersley in an essay entitled 'Communitarianism' (Eckersley 2006). There, Eckersley seeks to determine what ecologism can learn, conceptually, from communitarianism. She puts it like this, 'Does communitarianism provide the appropriate insights, conceptual resources and norms to guide political communities along ecologically sustainable paths?' (Eckersley 2006:91). After

---

<sup>4</sup> In using the words nature and environment as synonyms I am aware that these terms are contested concepts in the field of environmental thought. This is what makes them political terms which individuals deliberate and reflect on. As part of contesting the terms nature and human is the contesting of domination within and between these two categories in reality (See Plumwood 1993; Warren 2005).

exploring what resources communitarianism can provide, Eekersley responds to her own question in the affirmative and concludes that psychological attachment to one's particular community and locality provide reasons to care for the environment in general. The first aim of my thesis is to 'flesh out' Eekersley's endorsement of the conceptual resources of communitarianism for generating a political theory that will promote the following of 'ecologically sustainable paths'.

Eekersley argues for an eco-communitarianism in which the self's affection for its surroundings is the source of personal motivation to care for the wider environment. As noted above, ecologism and communitarianism, in particular the work of MacIntyre, are well placed to inform their respective arguments. However, I argue in favour of a politics of the common good and a politics that takes seriously the need for sustainable relationships with our environments which, whilst in part drawing on our interdependencies with the environment, also seeks to connect these personal concerns with collective politics. Building on Eekersley's outline of a synthesis between communitarianism and ecologism my contribution falls into two parts. Firstly, the thesis is an argument for drawing upon ontological argument concerning the self in both political theory and practice in order to challenge the narrow individualism of neoliberalism and consider alternative ways of relating to nature. Secondly, the thesis puts forward the case for a localised deliberative form of democracy, drawing on MacIntyre's arguments for political and social structures in which individuals can acknowledge their interdependence. Drawing on MacIntyre's argument then moves us beyond an individual placed based psychological argument to a collective political argument.

I will argue that MacIntyre's communitarianism utilises an ontological argument about the self. He does so in order to demonstrate that human individuals are involved in a reflexive and communal process of determining their identities through determining the identity of their communities with which they are interdependent. Selves in effect should be enabled in shaping the character or good life of their communities as they are part of that community, and vice-versa. Politics is then a vital, substantive way in which this shaping of a community and the human self takes place. It is essential, therefore, that individuals are able to determine the character of



their communities because individuals are viewed as beings that are shaped by their communal attachments. To deny individuals the chance to shape the character of their society, by casting concerns about the good life as private concerns alone, is then to limit the autonomy of the individual and the autonomy of the community. MacIntyre's approach is suggestive of a politics of localized deliberation in which the character of communities can be shaped by the members of those communities. In my view, ecologism mirrors this argument in so far as people are seen as embedded within particular attachments to communities that shape their conceptions of themselves, their values, and decisions. However, from the perspective of ecologism, these attachments also include those to the non-human world and the environments in which selves are located. In acknowledging their interdependencies and broadening the notion of interdependence to include our environmental interdependencies it is then possible to think of a politics and economic practice that is less destructive of our environments than that of neoliberalism.

In sum, the aim of this thesis is to develop a synthesis between MacIntyre's communitarianism and ecologism that may help to generate a more fundamentally sustainable political practice. A form of political practice that takes seriously the concerns of both ecologism and MacIntyre's arguments at a substantive level in decision making and deliberation. What my synthesis entails is this: firstly, a green approach that draws on MacIntyre's ontological argument, for humans to be seen as dependent rational animals, accommodates the concern of eco-centric thinkers that nature is not simply a material resource. Secondly, combining MacIntyre's arguments for decentred deliberative communities of practice with ecological political thought bolsters green arguments in favour of decentred deliberative forms of democracy as a method of holding in check our consumption of the natural world. Finally, the insight that MacIntyre offers is that individuals and political structures are interlinked; devolved democratic deliberative structures are key to enabling individuals to interact and both represent and learn from each other's interdependencies. In such a way I aim to show that MacIntyre's thought should prompt

greens to focus both on the type of individuals we are and the political and economic systems that shape and are, ideally, shaped by us as dependent rational animals.

### ***Outline of the thesis***

The outline of the thesis is as follows. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the key arguments, concepts and authors in the fields of ecologism and communitarianism using a themed approach to find common currents within both theories. In Chapter 1 I outline what I mean by ecologism. I will show that there is a strong ontological argument for a relational self, encumbered by its interconnections with others. However, unlike communitarians, the entanglements in which the ecological self finds itself engaged are not just social, but also connections to the wider non-human world. Broadly speaking, many eco-centric and green political theorists would like to see some form of wider consideration given to future generations, and the broader biotic and abiotic environment, in a way analogous to how communitarians emphasise that the self is ontologically bound up with others in its community in important ways. The ecological notion of the self, however, needs to be re-politicised for its ontological argument about the self to engage with politics.

In Chapter 2 I examine the ecological critique of neoliberalism, moving beyond the critique of deontological ontology, to examine the current ecological critique of neoliberalism as the political economy rooted in deontological liberalism and its narrow individualism. I will consider the contention from Marcel Wissenburg (1998) that ecologism is setting up a straw man argument in taking issue with liberalism and that green political thought can reconcile liberalism to its ends. Whilst I concur that this may have been the case with some historic liberal political thought, these more social forms of liberalism are not those which are currently dominant in practice. Because neoliberalism is the dominant form of liberalism an alternative form of political practice, alongside ontological argument, is required to challenge its environmentally and socially destructive aspects.

I shall also argue, in the second chapter, that this view of democracy as being about the pursuit of the good can be found within communitarianism. There are in fact a number of key areas of commonality shared by communitarianism and green political thought. I have referred to the ontological similarities in the opening section of the introduction, however, there are also overlaps concerning their approach to political practice. Firstly, both see democratic politics as being in some way about shaping the character of a community and thus are concerned with conceptions of the good at the substantive level, contra neoliberalism. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, they both propose deliberative alternatives to the management of neoliberalism. Whilst this deliberative perspective is developed in further chapters, in chapter 2 I propose that MacIntyre's challenge to neoliberalism, in the form of decentralized deliberative communities coupled with his notion of acknowledged dependence, are hugely important resources for greens to draw upon in advocating a more ecologically and socially sensitive politics than that of neoliberalism.

In chapters 3 and 4 I examine the work of Robyn Eckersley and Alasdair MacIntyre in order to establish the possibility of a synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's thought. In chapter 3 I examine Eckersley's work on the resources that communitarianism can offer to ecologism. She identifies key conceptual resources from communitarianism, such as particular attachments to place on the part of the self and its motivation for concern for the local and more general environment. Although I agree with Eckersley, I argue that a move beyond psychological attachment to place, towards an embedded ontology, should be made in order to establish a less particular basis for constructing ecologism. In this respect, I argue that we should look to MacIntyre's work on the notion of the self as dependent rational animal.

It may also seem that ecologism and communitarianism are at odds when it comes to considering nature. Communitarianism relies on an anthropocentric ontology. In fact, in examining MacIntyre's notion of dependency Dobson notes that:

...while I endorse this description of our condition in its most general form, I believe that MacIntyre's understanding of 'dependence' falls short of what is required for a full understanding of our condition as biological (better, 'ecological') beings. This is in part because the dependence of which MacIntyre mainly speaks is our dependence on human others (Dobson 2009:6).

In other words, even MacIntyre's communitarianism is too anthropocentric. Ecologism, on the other hand, refers to the self's attachments to nature and non-human selves. However, with Dobson, I would still argue that this is where MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals* brings ecologism and communitarianism together. By talking about the fundamentally vulnerable and dependent nature of human beings, MacIntyre's conception of the self echoes that of the self in ecologism, as being interdependent with others, but it requires 'greening' to add in our interdependence with non-human nature.

The purpose of chapter 4 is to establish what conceptual resources MacIntyre can offer to green political theory and then to establish the value of acknowledging dependence in political decision making. My examination of his *Dependent Rational Animals* shows that from a green point of view the work is anthropocentric, in the sense that its focus is principally on the intra-human relationships which sustain individual human autonomy. However, MacIntyre's work is also critical of arbitrary boundaries being drawn in philosophy between the categories of 'human' and 'animal' in ontological argument. In examining MacIntyre's work, I propose that eco-centric theorists can argue that it is our mutual interdependence with the environment that entails nature, and concerns about our environmental relations, be represented in political decision making. MacIntyre argues that this dependence on others ought to be acknowledged in political theory and practice, an argument that stands in contrast to the contemporary liberal notion of the self-sufficient, narrowly self-interested individual. It is the fulfilling of our responsibilities in giving to and receiving from others in their dependence that sustains the political community and the individuals within it, and which enables both to flourish. In such a way this synthesis

represents a collectively enlightened anthropocentric approach, rather than a personal eco-centric philosophy.

Dependence is still a term which can be open to interpretation in deliberation, but in debating this term in deliberation selves would be forced to account for their particular relationships to the environment. The type of politics that may enable the acknowledgement of our interdependencies, and challenge the radical individualism and consumerism of neoliberalism, I return to examine in the final chapter. In Chapters 5 and 6 I respond to green political theorist Graham Smith's call to consider the question of, 'how best to promote and cultivate empathy and enlarged mentality in representative assemblies' (Smith2003:118) in the light of a synthesis between green political theory and communitarianism. This is an important question because, despite efforts to promote environmental concern, there has been little change in the way we appropriate the environment to create commodities and utilise the environment as a pool for negative externalities. Following on from the claim that ontological constructions are an important and useful tool in the arguments of ecologism and communitarianism, I demonstrate that MacIntyre's use of the virtues of acknowledged dependence is a useful way of addressing Smith's question of how best to promote empathy and broader self-interest in democracies. In combining MacIntyre's understanding with an ecological approach virtue can be seen as a particular disposition of character. Such a disposition of character would entail that individuals acknowledge their interdependence with their shared environment in political deliberation and decision making such as to promote the interests of future generations and non-human entities.

Finally, and substantively, in chapter 7 I argue for a particular eco-communitarian synthesis between MacIntyre and green political thought that proposes a localised deliberative form of democracy which is coupled with a virtue of acknowledged dependence. Such a construction should enable citizens to develop their empathy with the others and environments on which they depend and to express this empathy when taking substantive decisions about the character of their communities. In drawing upon MacIntyre's short account of the political structures of acknowledged dependence, and his long-standing arguments cautioning against the

state as the site at which the character of communities should be shaped, I argue for a particular politics of local deliberation and fill in MacIntyre's "missing" green politics. In line with MacIntyre, I argue that such a politics would challenge the hegemony of neoliberalism and move towards re-embedding both political and economic practices back within communities. This argument reflects arguments from within green political thought, particularly those of Murray Bookchin, with whom I argue MacIntyre shares much common ground in arguing for humanly scaled political and economic practices that are both democratic and resist the socially and destructive elements of neoliberalism. In this final chapter, I will address concerns about MacIntyre's arguments in favour of local communities from Barry (2012) and Breen (2007) as the site of deliberation and acknowledgement of dependence. In order to do so, I present Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, the cantons of Rojava and the 'Idle No More' movement as examples of a localised deliberative politics that consciously re-empower communities to come together and address both social and ecological concerns. In doing so I argue that a local deliberative politics of acknowledged dependence, though in some respects utopian, is both desirable and achievable.

# Chapter 1

## Preparing the ground: The self and the good in ecologism

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this first chapter is to prepare the ground for a synthesis of ecologism and the communitarianism of Alasdair Macintyre by examining two key areas of theorising on which there is long-standing similarity; namely the nature of the self and the status of the good. I do this because, as I have argued in the introduction and will expand on in chapter 2, neoliberalism continues to dominate political thought and practice. Ingolfur Blühdorn puts the case bluntly: 'Economic thinking and the logic of the market have invaded all societal sub-systems, and marginalized all alternative ways of thinking. The permeation of all social relations and activities by the code of payment and profitability implies that identity formation becomes a primarily economic matter, and takes first and foremost the form of material accumulation and consumption...' (2004:39). As Blühdorn points out, and whilst of course economic thinking is not in and of its-self bad, it is the pervasive logic of neoliberalism, geared as it is to 'material accumulation and consumption' that has crowded out alternative ways of relating to nature in politics and economics. This form of liberalism contains within it and promotes a view of the self that is radically individualistic and acquisitive, and a view of the world as material for satisfying human preferences; largely to be owned as property.

Challenging this dominant neoliberal view of the self entails a look back at earlier work from the 1970s, 80s and 90s in green political theory when discussions around Deep ecology and eco-centric notions of the self were much more prominent than they are now. As mentioned in the introduction the debate in green political thought has now moved away from discussions about the ecological self and the good to focus primarily on issues such as climate change.<sup>1</sup> This is problematic for ecologism as climate change is conceived largely as a problem

---

<sup>1</sup> There are of course notable exceptions to this see Barry 2012 for example.

to be solved through technical adaptation rather than having deep-rooted normative or social causes to be highlighted and challenged. As Sherilyn MacGregor argues, ‘...the dominant framing of climate change has produced a depoliticizing view of nature as the enemy, which can only serve to reduce further the political potential of environmentalism as a social movement that is dedicated to remedying destructive human-nature relations’ (2014:621). Thus, MacGregor argues, the focus has moved away from posing alternative conceptions of the self and generating normative challenges to neoliberalism, to one in which the environmental movement is absorbed in tackling the technical challenge of climate change. Individuals are not encouraged to think of themselves as, necessarily, involved in a political struggle or to question the attractiveness of continued economic growth, but to alter some private consumer preferences within a neoliberal framework which remains unchallenged. In other words, the ontological debate about the nature of the self has been lost just as neoliberalism is entrenching its world view and consequently its hegemony over social, economic and political practices. In response, both Barry and MacGregor call for agonistic forms of citizenship and resistance to this neoliberal ‘colonisation’ of the political space regarding the environment (MacGregor 2014:630, Barry 2012:271).

My own response is to look back to the position that ecologism took, contra neoliberalism, and seek to re-politicise ecologism through MacIntyre’s thought. There are two key features that are fundamental to ecologism and that are the focus of my analysis in this chapter.<sup>2</sup> The first is a view of the self as interrelated with its environment. This is an ontological position in that it deals with the nature of the self and contends that essential

---

<sup>2</sup> Other environmental political theorists such as Tim Hayward may argue that liberalism is more than adequately equipped to accommodate the concerns of ecologism through constitutional rights based approaches to ameliorating environmental harms (see Hayward 2006) and I shall explore this argument in chapter 2. In mounting this critique I acknowledge that I am focusing on one particular articulation of environmental political theory, and that a broader point of view would need to take into account the possibility of a ‘liberal environmentalism’. There have been influential accounts of this strand of green political theory (Wissenburg 1998, Hailwood 2004, Bell 2002), and these writers would question the affinity I am drawing between green political theory and communitarianism – mostly because they would regard my account of green political theory as too narrow. These concerns will be principally addressed in chapter two following the discussion of ecologism in communitarian terms in this chapter.



features about the self, particularly its relationship to others, have a bearing on political theory and practice. The second feature concerns substantive deliberation as being about 'the good life', a view that there are qualitatively better ways of being in the world for people and that questions around these ways of being are both personal and political questions as the self and its community are interrelated. In exhibiting these features, I argue that ecologism is conceptually similar to communitarianism.

I will first look to the work of eco-centric philosophers Arne Naess, Warwick Fox and Freya Mathews, to arguments about the self that challenge the neoliberal conception of the individual as narrowly self-interested. In the second part of the chapter, I provide a discussion of 'the good' in the writings by green political theorists Robert Goodin and John Barry. Both stand in opposition to a neoliberal or deontological position in seeking to reopen debate about the good, in relation to the environment, at a substantive level.

There are reasons, however, why ecologism has grown quieter over the last 20 years that need to be addressed. Chief amongst these I would argue is that it largely failed to turn outwards from looking at the self to engage politically and pose more concrete political, social and economic alternatives. Whilst these ontological questions about the self are important, as I shall indeed argue here, they need to be complimented by linking to political practice. I argue that this can be achieved by synthesising their arguments concerning the good and the self with similar communitarian arguments. I argue that synthesising these arguments with those of Alasdair MacIntyre, concerning the self as dependent rational animal and the form of politics suggested by this, moves ecologism back in the direction of re-engaging with politics. Thus, ecologism can challenge neoliberalism in terms of both ideas and practice. This will be the task of the latter part of the thesis.

## ***Part One: The concept of the self in ecologism***

Ontological claims play an important role in political theory. This is because they set out and deal with arguments about the characteristics of the self that impact on political, social and economic theory. For those who advocate an ontological approach such as Taylor (1992), Sandel (1984), and MacIntyre (1994) thinking about the self in political theory is important as the type of self one considers at the root of one's theory determines the scope and type of theory, and indeed the practice, proposed by a political theory. If we premise political philosophy on the relational, or dependent, self then the outcome is a different form of politics than that which follows from contemporary liberal assumptions of an independent self.

Communitarian political theory rests on a claim that the self is defined through its relationships to others. We shall see this in chapter 4 when looking at Alasdair MacIntyre's notion of the self as fundamentally dependent on others. Furthermore, communitarians argue that although deontological liberalism disavows ontological argument, in that it seeks to build theory from universalist principles, it actually does assume the ontological claim that the self is an independent individual reasoner. This leads to a belief that the self is capable of reflection on its ends independently from its community.

In both communitarianism and ecologism, the self is viewed as constituted through relationships. This view connects the interests of the individual to the interests of the community as they shape each other's individual and collective behaviour. As such, both argue that in some way individuals should not be alienated from these wider contexts in which the self is constituted. Rather the individual should be able to participate in shaping the character of these contexts in a way that enables the self's maintenance and enhancement (flourishing). Thus, the self is a political construct, politics shapes the self and the self should be able to shape politics. I will explain my claim as I examine the arguments of green political theorists in the next section.

In ecologism, ontological constructions of the self are notably expressed by eco-centric political and ethical theorists (see Naess 1989, Fox 1994, Mathews 1994 for example). Often called deep ecologists, these theorists are notable for their reconstructions of the concept of the self in a way that promotes a concern for the environment beyond its value as a material resource for continued economic growth. A common argument put forward by these thinkers is that the self is far more interconnected with other entities in its environment than is recognised by other political theories. The approach to the self that is characteristic of neoliberalism is rejected as radically or atomistically individual in the sense that the self is conceived of as detached from nature and other selves. In fact, eco-centric thinkers argue that the dominant liberal assumptions about the self, qua the individual bearer of rights, promote the view that the environment, and organisms within it, is simply material out in the world for human consumption. They argue that this has led to increased exploitation and depletion within our environments.

Though eco-centric theorists take inspiration from many non-western and indigenous cultures, their targets are predominantly the institutions, norms and practices of industrialised, western, democratic societies concerning the way in which individuals relate to nature. They stress the need for cultural change for individuals to experience nature in ways other than as a resource for appropriation.

To demonstrate that there are compatibilities between ecologism and communitarianism and that eco-centrics can learn from Alasdair MacIntyre's communitarianism to move out of their "inward turn" to the political realm, I will draw upon the works of Arne Naess, Warwick Fox and Freya Mathews. Their work interlinks as they examine relational conceptions of the self. They see humans as the appreciators of value in the world but argue that these selves are materially and psychologically embedded within ecological relationships. As such, humans, having the capacity to appreciate their interconnections, can and should empathise with the plight of non-human nature. This understanding runs contra to the view of the disembodied, deontological, liberal self that eco-

centric theorists attack as being narrowly self-interested with its own material concerns, rather than broadly concerned with the natural systems in which it is embedded. It is this embedded and relational self that has strong parallels within communitarian thinking on ontology.

### ***Arne Naess: The concept of the expansive self***

The first theorist that takes a relational view of the self, that is similar to a communitarian approach, is the late Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. Naess's work presents a conception of the self that is expansive in its relations and interests with others and thereby runs counter to the narrower self-interested self of neoliberalism. In the 1970s and 80s Naess, sometimes alongside George Sessions and Bill Devall, mapped out a philosophy that demonstrated his deep-seated engagement with his environment. His intention was to express some of the thoughts and deeper questioning of a movement he termed Deep ecology. His differentiation of the philosophically- (or 'ecosophically' (see Naess 1989)) informed Deep ecology movement from a shallower ecology movement is reflected in Dobson's distinction between ecologism and environmentalism outlined in the introduction. Deep ecology is an approach that set out to question dominant values towards the environment by posing alternative ontological understandings of the self and axiological positions on the environment.

Whilst Deep ecology was largely associated with the 1970s and 1980s it has a central role to play in the evolution of green political thought in that it brought ontological questions about the self to the fore in green political thought, particularly in Western Europe and North America. This was at a time when such challenges to liberalism were diminishing from a Marxist perspective with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the abuses of successive communist states. It remains relevant to today's debates, however, as the nature of the self within neoliberalism is still largely uncontested, certainly in practice, and to a large degree in theory. As such it is important to find a way to reconnect and re-politicise these debates about ontology.

Ontology features prominently in Naess's general formulation of the principles of Deep ecology. Though not referring directly to the self qua human, Naess describes a deep ecological position as one that sees other living entities as knots in a web of interconnections. For Naess, however, it is not enough to stop here and say that organisms exist within a network. He goes on to say that organisms are *intrinsically* related through this network or field. This means that to some degree the relationship between one organism and another actually constitutes the organism in a very similar manner to which the human community is thought to be constitutive of the self in the communitarian understanding, as we will see in the following chapter. For Naess, this formulation of networks of entities includes people, who he describes as not existing *in* the environment but rather as a part of it, and thus constituted through their relations to other people and organisms within their environment (Naess1995:226).

Naess fleshes out the implications of these constitutive interrelations for the human self. To Naess, the self of Deep ecology is embedded within a nature of which it is a part. Of first order importance, admittedly, are social relationships between people, those referred to by communitarians like MacIntyre. But for Naess, we are also constituted by relationships beyond the human community. These relationships are with other organisms within what he terms the 'mixed community'. This mixed community is comprised of self-aware/conscious humans, non-human entities, ecosystems and the abiotic environment. Naess terms this ontology, where entities are defined by their interrelations, a 'gestalt' conception of the self (Naess 1989:61). This is to say that an entity is what it is because of its positioning in *relation* to others in a wider whole, i.e. the biosphere. Summing up what a gestalt identity is, David Rothenberg says that, '...identity is inherent only in the relationships which make up the entity' (Rothenberg 1989:6).

Environmental problems, as Naess sees them, stem from blindness towards these wider constitutive relationships. He is critical of the model of the person in which the self is most mature at the point at which it considers itself in relation to society and considers itself

to transcend that society. For Naess, the self is at its most mature when it realises that it is also constituted through *identification* with nature and the non-human (Naess 1995:226).

Identification is, for Naess, a key mechanism in establishing the normative type of behaviour that respects the environment for reasons that are not only based on its economic value (Naess 1995:226). The self Naess describes above, as falling short of his notion of the ecological self, is one whose identification is constructed purely through reference to its intra-human relationships, therefore, its conception of self-interest is confined to the intra-human ethical sphere.

Naess says that as humans our self-interest is fundamentally that of 'self-realisation' such that we wish to realise our potential in as full a way as possible. Part of this self-realisation for Naess must include a process of widening the identification of the self as part of our securing our own self-realisation. Completing the transition from the 'is' of ontology to the normative 'ought', Naess says that this process of our self-realisation 'is hindered if the self-realisation of others, with whom we identify, is hindered. Our love of our self will fight this hindering process by assisting the self-realisation of others according to the formula "Live and let Live!"' (Naess 1995:226). For Naess, we learn of the interests of others through interaction with them (Naess 1995:229).

In sum, Naess's conception of the self relies on a relational ontology, in so far as an individual is identified through its relationship to others, and on the processes of identification and self-realisation; identification being a process which Naess says elicits 'intense empathy' for those we identify with (Naess 1995:227). By relational ontology I mean an ontology in which the autonomy of the self is defined not as radically separate to other selves, as with contemporary liberalism, nor as simply a function of a greater whole, as with some forms of socialism, but as autonomous relative to other selves. As such, the self is defined not solely by itself, nor simply by a larger community, but in the self's relationship to other selves; be it through interactions or language (see also Fox 1995: 232). Naess's process of identification broadens our self-interest, from an egotistical self with narrow self-interest to a self whose

interests are 'enlightened', in which the self sees its own self-interests in realising its own potential, are bound up with those of others, including non-humans (Naess 1995:229). We will see this echoed closely in the following chapters, as MacIntyre argues for a conception of the self that is interdependent with others, and in which the self acts most virtuously when they acknowledge this interdependence. Importantly from a green perspective, we will have to heed Naess's call to consider nature as well as other humans when thinking about interdependence.

### ***Warwick Fox: The transpersonal self***

Warwick Fox also draws upon a notion of the self which is similar to that of communitarianism. His concept of 'transpersonal ecology' resonates with Naess's understanding of the expansive self. This is because it is a response to criticism of Naess's view as too holistic and too focused on nature over and above human concerns. As such Fox works to move Deep ecology in a more anthropocentric direction. Fox has been closely involved with interpreting Naess' works in Deep ecology and is an advocate of the relational approach Naess adopts. Fox feels that what is of most value in Naess's work is his view of the self and its identification with other entities in nature, or what Fox terms Naess's 'philosophical sense of *deep ecology*' (Fox 1995:142 emphasis in original). Fox argues that the strength of Naess's Deep ecology derives from his view of the self as ontologically internally related to, and thus constituted by, its environment and the organisms and ecosystems therein. This ontological argument, for Fox, provides the ground on which to advocate fundamental ethical concern for the environment. In light of this argument, and inspired by thinkers such as Lyn White Junior, '...what we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the [hu]man-nature relationship' (White in Fox 1995:6).

For Fox, like Naess, the self and other entities are not to be thought of as fixed objects distinct from all other entities but, rather, entities are constituted through their relationships with other entities. Fox argues that, '...the *central* intuition of Deep Ecology ... is the idea that

there is no firm ontological divide in the field of existence'. In other words, in reality, there is no clear physical or psychological divide between subjects and objects or between living entities (Fox 2003:255). The boundaries are blurred precisely because these entities are defined by their interrelations, with entities mutually playing parts in defining each other; they exist only relative to one another. Importantly for Fox, this means that the human and non-human spheres, which we commonly think of as being distinct, are not so; rather they are fundamentally interrelated and constituted through these interrelations. Quoting Bill Devall, Fox goes on to say, 'Deep Ecology begins with unity rather than dualism which has been the dominant theme in western philosophy' (Devall in Fox 2003:255).

Fox's concern, like many other deep ecologists, is that the fundamentals they rely on are not derived purely from a Newtonian atomistic science but from inter-relational philosophical enquiry. Thus, an ecological view of the self and its relationship to others is not simply determined by the results of scientific enquiry alone but also through felt experience of the environment and reflection upon it. This is important from the perspective of ecologism, as it is in part the dominance of a rational/instrumental world view that has clouded out less instrumental views of nature within western societies. The philosophy that informs this, as often stated by deep ecologists and eco-feminists alike, is not the Cartesian subject/object, spirit/matter dualism but that of philosophies which reject bifurcation of matter from spirit. The reason for this, in part, is that deep ecologists are critical of the division of people from their environment based on the idea that people possess spirit whilst nature is simply unfolding organic material. According to many eco-centric theorists, this division has been used to justify a reckless instrumental attitude towards the environment. An attitude in which people are assumed to be apart from and above the 'natural' world, enabling them to justify utilising that 'realm' to their own ends without any systematic concern for its integrity (see Goodin 1992, Mathews 1994 for example).

Fox appreciates that human values are naturally anthropocentric in that they derive from a human point of view, even when we are trying to interpret the agency of other



organisms or ecosystems. What Fox is trying to achieve is to persuade us that through wider identification with the environment, something to which we are bound through our constitutive interrelations, we might be inclined to act in a way that is less 'chauvinistic' towards it. From an ontological description of the self, Fox proceeds to utilise a model of the transpersonal self from psychology to demonstrate that once selves realise their fundamental interconnections, even from an anthropocentric point of view, they will be more likely to care for the natural world without being compelled to do so.<sup>3</sup>

For Fox, ontological approaches contain within them the explanations for why we ought to behave in a respectful manner towards the environment (Fox 1994: 217). They explain and contain the *motivation* to consider the interests of other animals and their ecosystems as part of our own self-interest. The motivation to care for other species and ecosystems stems from the fact that humans are deeply embedded within the ecosystems that surround them. This is true both materially and ideationally. If our identity and being are contingent upon the ecosystems that surround us, then we cannot self-interestedly use the environment without considering the interests of other species and their ecosystems.

Communitarian arguments utilise ontology in an almost identical way with respect to why the self should be concerned with the community, and why the self has a fundamental interest in being able to shape and participate in the life of the community. In both ecologism and communitarianism the identity of the self is partly contingent upon the identity of the community and vice- versa. Therefore, communitarian arguments may be a key conceptual resource for the arguments of ecologism. Furthermore, when we turn to look at Macintyre's

---

<sup>3</sup> I do not use the term care here and throughout the thesis lightly. I am aware of the positive connotations in terms of respecting our environments and dependents but also of the negative implications of an un-critical application of this term. Without critical consideration the role and burden of care can and does fall unevenly across the genders (See MacGregor 2006). The call for care in this thesis is to resemble that of eco-feminism in that an eco-communitarian citizenship is to call for democratisation of the household (MacGregor 2006:234), as with other areas of life and work, so that the responsibility of care can be shared fairly. Furthermore, I would advocate the position that caring work needs to be supported institutionally off the back of a democratisation of everyday life which may provide 'the conditions for a public political morality' (MacGregor 2006:234; Plumwood 1995:157). Chapters 5 and 6 will turn to deliberation and citizenship.

argument that the self is fundamentally vulnerable and thus dependent on others in forming its identity and in attaining its independence, there is much suggestion of overlap (see MacIntyre 1999).

Fox's ontological approach to eco-philosophy purports a change in the relationship between people and their environments at the collective level. I argue that Fox and other eco-centric philosophers' arguments should be important politically because they challenge the conception of the self found within liberal political thought. If we premise political philosophy on the relational, or dependent, self then the outcome is a different form of politics than that which follows from contemporary liberal assumptions of an independent self. Where this would be most apparent is in the way nature is represented in political argument. On a neoliberal understanding, an individual's concern for the status of nature is a matter of the private preference of an atomistic individual and not a collective political concern. From Fox's transpersonal point of view, however, concerns about nature run much deeper: they are concerns about the self's engagement with a wider community of entities that are constitutive of the self, they support the self's existence and the existence of other selves, and thus they should represent substantive collective and therefore political concerns.

For both Fox and Naess, the transpersonal self (or the expansive self, defined by its relationships, which acknowledges that it is embedded in the ecosystems around it) will be inclined to act more benevolently towards the ecosphere rather than simply seeing it as a sink for its pollution or a resource pool for consumption. The transpersonal self identifies with the interests of the environment as part of the self's own interests.

Fox outlines what he means by identification as a way of pre-empting criticisms that to subsume the whole of nature into one's identity is an extreme form of holism which denies any autonomy to any entity at all. He points out that the identification of the self with nature risks equivocating nature with the self's own identity, in effect subsuming the entirety of life into the self, leaving it free to treat nature as a single homogenous unity without any autonomy from the individual (Fox 1995:232). Fox emphasises that the concept of the self

which he is using is one which is *relational* and embedded in nature. As a result, the self can identify and empathise with other living entities whilst appreciating that they are autonomous in relation to the self, just as the self is in some ways a unit within nature, as opposed to being entirely subsumed within an identity imposed upon them. This is not an easy point to defend, especially when Naess and Fox use terms such as ‘expansive sense of self’ or ‘wider sense of self’. What is important for our purposes is to recognise that the self is described as being constituted through its interrelationships; that it is constituted by the interrelationships of demarcated agents. Furthermore, drawing on MacIntyre’s notions of dependence and an acknowledgement of this dependence or interdependence by the self, as I will show in chapter 4, will move this eco-centrism in an enlightened anthropocentric direction and away from radical holism.

Adopting an approach based upon ontology and identification, Fox is attempting to bypass the problems associated with taking an intrinsic value-based approach to pacifying the relationship between people and their environment, and to avoid moralizing about the environment by developing ethical codes. Fox states that transpersonal ecologists (such as Devall and Sessions 1985) who advocate wider identification with our environments as a mode of pacifying our relationship with our environment, ‘present their approach as a realistic, positive option (i.e., as an approach that one *can* take and that one might *want* to take) rather than as a logically or morally established obligation (i.e., as an approach with which one ought to *comply*)’ (Fox 1995: 243 emphasis in original). As such, by demonstrating that the self is constructed through its relationships with the world around it and that both have a mutual interest in self-realisation, Fox generates a notion of the self which is fundamentally inclined to act considerately when interacting with its environment: ‘For transpersonal ecologists, given a deep enough understanding of the way things are, the response of being inclined to care for the unfolding of the world in all its aspects follows “naturally”- not as a *logical* consequence but as a *psychological* consequence’ (Fox 1995:247, emphasis in original). This is to say that care for the environment could be instinctive, just as care for each other is, or should be, and

could come from within individuals rather than by way of an external rule imposed on people, which is less likely to motivate concern for other species and our common ecosystems. In this way, it would appear that the aim is to fundamentally tip the balance of argument from short term narrowly self-interested consumerism toward considering the interests of the wider ecological community as part of our own self-interest.

### ***Freya Mathews: the ecological self***

Freya Mathews is an environmental philosopher whose thinking also challenges dominant political and ethical modes of thought on the environment and people's relationship to it. Her work represents not just an alternative philosophy but also a challenge to patterns of domination of nature by contemporary western societies, and thus a challenge to dominant political norms and practices. As such Mathews' argument is a work of political theory as well as philosophy.

Mathews offers an argument that relies on a specifically ontological perspective. For her, science is western culture's dominant mode of experiencing and interpreting the world. The problem with our popular view of reality, as she sees it, is that it is informed by an outmoded, Newtonian, atomistic science, and not by developments in quantum physics that see the world not as distinct atoms and particles but as flows and clusters of energy (Mathews 1994:49). These more recent developments are a paradigmatic shift in a scientific world view which suggests a more holistic, interconnected, systems view of the world, the self, and the self's relationship to that world.

Mathews couples this empirical insight with holistic thought from philosophers, most notably Spinoza, but also Whitehead and others who stress a metaphysics in which the universe is conceived holistically, with the view of reality from quantum physics as a unified field of space-time in which space is, 'intrinsically dynamic and mutable: locally it stretches, ripples and curves, and globally it expands. Wave-like disturbances constitute gravitational

effects; highly curved, “knotted-up” regions constitute matter... energy is simply the curvature of spacetime’ (Mathews 1994:60). In this way Mathews is keen to stress that developments in science inform us that reality is comprised of flows and waves and that this world view is at odds with the dominant, western, cultural view of reality, in which matter is comprised of material constructed from atoms related only externally and causally (see also Capra 1997). The worldview she criticises is one in which ‘Individualism, or, as I shall call it, substance pluralism, is a metaphysical archetype, an archetypal representation of the basic structure of the world. It portrays the world as a set of discrete, logically and ontologically autonomous substances’ (Mathews 1994:8). This is a worldview in which reality is composed of many interacting particle-like entities. This atomistic world view, Mathews illustrates, has its roots in classical philosophy but its re-emergence as a total world view or cosmology stems from the work of Enlightenment mathematicians and scientists, prominently Isaac Newton but also Galileo and Kepler. According to this view the idea that world is composed of ‘matter in motion’, in which its constituents ‘were no more than machines’, moved into philosophy through the thought of Descartes and his framing of the world through mind/body dualism in which ‘form, function, quality, agency, are the province of mind, inertia and mechanical motion that of matter’ (Mathews 1994:16-18). This historical interpretation is shared by ecofeminists and other deep ecologists.<sup>4</sup> For Mathews, this world view is seen as directly informing the ontology of a dominant neoliberalism and its political norms, in which the self is very much viewed as a radically distinct unit related to other individuals only through eternal cause and effects. This is also the same contemporary liberal alienated self of which communitarians are critical.

Mathews argues that: ‘when we draw upon traditions of atomistic thought, in which the world is conceived as distinct bits of matter, certain major normative consequences occur

---

<sup>4</sup> See, in particular, ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood’s (1993) detailed review and explanation of the emergence of dualisms in post-enlightenment culture in which the ‘human’ (and more specifically the man) in the human/nature dualism dominates the concept and entity of nature through the radical bifurcation of the two concepts in thought and consequently practice.

as these western cultures are subject to a 'bad' cosmology - representing Nature not as hostile but as indifferent to our interests' (Mathews 1994:14). For her such a cosmology leads to a destructive relationship with nature, perceived as inert material, that is appropriated for our own narrowly atomistic self-interests without any immediate concern given to the effects of this appropriation (see also Merchant 1983). From a monistic metaphysical position, however, all entities are seen as fundamentally interrelated (beyond causality) in terms of the substances that compose them. The result is the discovery of a world view similar to that which we have seen expressed by Naess and Fox.

Mathews also constructs an ontological description of the self, from a quantum physics perspective, as an entity whose individual autonomy derives from the flows of energy that surround and embody other living and non-living entities whose identity inheres in its interest in their self-realization (Mathews 1994:141). As such, she admits both that we are physically dependent upon nature (in the sense that it embodies the flows of energy which comprise us as living systems) and that nature, too, represents a wider set of unfoldings of which we are a part and with which the interest of our own self is bound up. Both realisations entail, then, an attitude change from treating the environment as an inert resource, whose value is primarily realised through its consumption, to something that is valuable in its state of unfolding, as something which has self-interest and therefore value in self-realisation, just as humans do. The normative thrust of Mathews's thesis is, '...that we should adopt a bio- or eco-centric ethic, and learn to "tread lightly" on this earth, taking from it only what we must to satisfy our "vital needs"' (Mathews 1994:147).

Expanding on this point, Mathews relates the psychological/ ontological condition of narrow self-interest to its harmful implications for the natural world. For her, if creatures act discordantly with regard to their environment they destroy both themselves and their environment. However, she finds that most entities which survive today do not behave in this way. Rather than flourish by over-grazing, they survive by sharing resources and not arbitrarily

destroying other species. For humans to flourish we should think as if we are part of a larger unfolding system and alter our behaviour to reflect this (Mathews 1994:158).

Thus, Mathews combines an ontology of the self, as constituted through its relations with its environment, with a cosmology of a world that is similarly constituted, to advocate a cultural change which reflects this. Why advocate this view? According to Mathews, to think in a way which is scientifically and philosophically outmoded represents a dangerous and harmful way of existing within the environment, and this is borne out by our current treatment of our and others' environments. By changing our cultural world view and representation of the self we can start to act in a way that is more respectful towards our environment and which aims to ensure the flourishing of both ourselves and our environments.

In keeping with the ontological approaches discussed above, the aim - pacifying people's relationship with the environment -- is to be achieved through a change in culture and identification with the environment. If people living in those parts of the world that have followed western enlightenment traditions of thought identify themselves as a part of nature, and nature as a part of themselves, they are more likely, than at present, to accord natural systems and entities greater respect in their decision making and practice. According greater respect and care towards nature, in practice, relies upon first advocating a change in the dominant view of the way the self is constituted in relation to other entities in its environment. However, what is lacking in Mathews's argument here is how such a change in consciousness is to be facilitated, and how her ontological/cosmological approach connects to political and social change, in favour of the concerns of a more ecologically enlightened self.

In drawing up these ontological arguments these eco-centric philosophers represent a challenge to the dominant neoliberal conception of the atomistic self. From Mathews's point of view, as with Naess and Fox, cultural/ideological change rooted in an ecologically embedded/relational ontology can motivate change in the norms governing our relationship to our environments in political practice. I would like to argue that this is the equivalent to the ontological arguments of communitarians that the self is constituted through its community

and that the self ought, therefore, to be able to determine the character of its community through engaging in the politics and questioning the good of the community.

Yet, whilst they challenge dominant understandings of the self and its relationship to nature they, in themselves, do not pose political or economic alternatives to neoliberalism. As such, whilst they are important arguments in keeping alive and popularising alternative ways of relating to nature, these arguments have lost their voice as they have not yet connected with a collective response to the dominance of neoliberalism. Such a collective approach, rather than individual change, is important now more than ever. As we have seen argued above by MacGregor (2014), environmental problems are ever more being presented simply as technical problems to be fixed within the very mode of thought and practices that are causing those problems. Furthermore, it has been argued that the appeal of such ontological arguments is limited because of their focus on holism or the expansiveness of the self. Such positions are then interpreted as a form of eco-spiritualism focused only on changing the self through self-reflection and complacent in not addressing the social causes of exploitation (See Bookchin 1988:13). What is required is a way of putting this ontological argument in terms that, not only reconnect it to politics but which also make it pertinent from an anthropocentric point of view to individuals who are already engaging with the world conceived as material for human use.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, green political thought is right to propose alternative ontological and cosmological views, as is healthy for deliberation and challenging dominant conceptions of the self. However, it also needs to continue to pose more concrete, political, alternatives in tandem that can better accommodate these differing world views than neoliberalism, which has closed down debate over the fundamentals of our relationship to nature.

Certainly, this thesis aims to connect the arguments outlined above with MacIntyre's own communitarian approach to politics to demonstrate that ontological argument and political argument are compatible and to politicise these arguments. Arguments about the

---

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in the final chapter I shall turn to drawing on Bookchin's social ecology in re-politicising ecologism.



nature of the self are political arguments as they determine the scope and form of political practice. A narrowly individualised conception of the self leads to a politics of arbitration between selves and a de-politicisation of questions about the good. A relational conception of the self entails that some questions about the good are collective and require public deliberation; such as those questions about the relationship of ourselves to environments to which we are all connected. However, these views on the good life need to be connected to collective political struggle to make a difference and effect political, social and economic change. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate that not only do communitarian criticisms of neoliberalism focus on ontological argument, but they should also encourage ecologism to refocus on posing alternatives to the political economy of neoliberalism. I will also consider whether these ontological arguments actually do set these greens apart from a liberal environmentalism in such a radical way as I have suggested here. In the final section, I now wish to turn to the second area, concerning the character of the good, in which I consider ecologism – as a distinctive political ideology - to share ideas with communitarianism.

## ***Part Two: The concept of the good in ecologism***

In setting out their arguments for particular conceptions of the self in political and moral thought, it is clear that eco-centric theorists have a set of views about nature in which nature is something which is larger than the self, or which unfolds as a wider set of selves (Mathews 1994:158). I turn now to the second concept within ecologism that demonstrates an affinity with communitarianism, that of the notion of the good.

Theories of the good in ecologism appear to relate to those of ontology in that they set out what is of value in nature and account for why particular aspects and elements of the environment are of value, and indeed why they ought to be valued. Thus, we will see that Robert Goodin, an advocate of the use of the concept of the good in ecological political thought, argues that nature's value lies in its unfolding independently and around the self.

Goodin's theory, explicitly about the good of nature, advocates outcomes that promote, or enable, this aspect of nature, and is just one example of the use of this concept, in a substantive way, within ecological political thought.

In ecologism, the notion of the good is used as a tool to argue for green institutional procedures and outcomes just as it is within communitarianism. In this section, I will explore ecological conceptions of the good put forward by Robert Goodin and John Barry. These two theorists have been selected because they move in a direction of suggesting how our relationship to nature can be normatively readdressed and thus in the direction of collective change. We will see that both eco-centric greens and communitarians share common ground. This is in arguing that to exclude or narrow down notions of the good life, in political theory and practice, is to remove the possibility of collectively altering the direction of a democratic society and its internal and external human, non-human and environmental relationships.

### ***Robert Goodin: The good of nature as context***

Goodin gives us an example of a green theory of value that attempts to avoid making ecologism reliant on upon radical notions of intrinsic value (the contentious idea that things have value independently of other valuers) and to bring unity to the green movement as a whole. It provides a definite instance in which the concept of the good is advocated in ecologism. I argue that his methodology, in the sense of using the good to direct the actions of individuals, echoes a communitarian approach and moves towards a normatively green politics. Goodin's theory is an axiomatic or value-based theory that, as he says, '...is indisputably a theory of the Good' which 'should tell us both *what* is to be valued and *why*' (Goodin 1992: 19-20, emphasis in original). I do not entirely agree with his essentialist view of nature as something that unfolds separate from humanity, though I recognise this may be part of what some people find valuable in nature. I am also sympathetic to Eckersley's concern that Goodin's argument does not suppose any theory of agency, i.e. does democracy or

authoritarianism best support this realisation of the good, and that its connection to democracy is only contingent (Eckersley 1996:223).<sup>6</sup>What I find to be of particular value is that he is using a notion of the good that contests dominant neoliberal views of the good of nature as commodity.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, I will use Goodin's argument to show how ecologism, as with communitarianism, presents arguments about the good that require debate at the substantive political level.

Goodin calls his theory a theory of value rather than a theory of the good because he feels that it will be easier for economists, who often bear the brunt of green criticisms, to engage with his argument that naturalness is a value that they ought to take into serious consideration in their calculations. Goodin's theory of value is, '...a distinctively consequentialistic one. It is a theory of the good, rather than a theory of the right. The green ethic, thus characterized, is a theory that tells us to promote and protect things of value, understood as things that have been produced through natural processes' (Goodin 1992: 111). He goes on to say that, '...it is a theory that is addressed to moral agents, in the hope that they might themselves use it in guiding their conduct' (Goodin 1992: 111).

Goodin's view, as to where his version of the good sits as a prescription for behaviour, is somewhat non-committal. It appears that though his notion of the good should structure green argument it is not the be all and end all of moral argument. In fact, he is keen to point out that he feels, '...incompleteness, in turn, gives rise to possibilities ... for legitimately mixing and matching ostensibly incompatible theories' (Goodin 1992:19). Reading into Goodin's position it may be possible to say that he is not seeking to provide a comprehensive view of the good but suggesting that his green theory of value is an important good which ought to act

---

<sup>6</sup> In drawing on MacIntyre's arguments for a politics of acknowledged dependence I will show that theories of the good in ecologism can be tightly connected to those for deliberative democracy (see chapter 7).

<sup>7</sup> I will explore this ecological criticism of neoliberalism further in the following chapter.

as a vigorous competitor to other ideas of the good, such as consumer-based theories of the good (Goodin 1992:23).

Goodin develops a theory of value whereby valuers, people, value nature because of its role as an autonomously unfolding context larger than the self. It is the way in which the theory is structured as a conception of the good, rather than the content of his theory, that I would like to consider in a synthesis with MacIntyre's communitarianism. Goodin's theory represents an attempt to move beyond seeing nature purely as a material resource for human consumption to establishing a widely acknowledged value for the environment in its natural (independently unfolding) state. This theory of value avoids the criticisms associated with an intrinsic value approach as the value in nature derives from the relationship between humans and their environment.<sup>8</sup>

Goodin's green theory of value turns on the idea that the more natural an environment is, the more valuable it is – and a 'natural' environment is one in which nature is allowed to unfold independently of humans. In such a way, then, we may continue to be able to situate ourselves within this wider natural context which gives 'sense and pattern' to our lives (Goodin 1992: 37). This formulation implies that if nature is interfered with by humans it loses some of this 'natural' value.

I agree with Goodin that an important part of what people value in nature is that it unfolds independently of humans. It is something bigger than ourselves and our communities and constitutes not only a habitat for humans but all life. However, it could be argued that nature's meaning is plural; all living things also use nature and thus in part each other to

---

<sup>8</sup> Some eco-philosophers such as Aldo Leopold (1949) seek to defend nature through arguing that nature holds value in and of itself. However, this argument is vulnerable to objections. That is in terms of its commitment to the intrinsic value of nature. This is the theoretical argument for nature to have value it must be valued by someone and so it follows that nature cannot hold independent value. Secondly, nature's possessing of this intrinsic value provides no guide as to how we ought to interact with it-should all nature therefore be left untouched? As such, many green theorists, particularly those concerned with collective change in our orientation to nature, avoid this argument and pursue the transpersonal ontological/ identification arguments we have seen above. Here Goodin seeks to avoid the difficulties of an intrinsic value approach through asserting that an important part of nature's value or meaning lies in its independent unfolding.

sustain themselves. I would also argue in line with the ecologists above and MacIntyre's argument in chapter 4, that we human animals are also a part of nature. However, what I take of value in Goodin's argument is that it is crucial that our instrumental use of nature does not destroy the ability of other entities to also inhabit and appreciate the values of nature.

Importantly, as Goodin's argument develops, he notes that we cannot insist on nature being hermetically sealed off from human influence. However, he argues, we ought to consider cultures that acknowledge the value of nature's autonomy as having captured a proper relationship with nature which respects nature's natural value. Thus, it appears that he is talking about nature's *relative* autonomy rather than its absolute autonomy, as it is hard to imagine nature as a wider context without the human subject within it. Goodin's theory of value then implies that the self can be described as acting virtuously when nature's independence is taken into consideration, and with vice when disregarding the naturalness/autonomy of its environment in relation to ourselves and future generations. Such an approach, drawing on the notion of the virtues as guides for action, would accord with MacIntyre's Aristotelian virtue ethical approach, in which the virtues are seen as dispositions of character conducive to living the good life.

Included within the concept of nature are natural entities such as human and non-human animals. Goodin sees the existence of other species, rather than individual animals, as part of the order of nature. This formulation entails that we should 'cream off only as much of the resource flow as is consistent with leaving enough to reproduce at least as much in the future' (Goodin 1992:73). This allows natural processes and entities a degree of autonomy, and permits an appreciation of their natural value, thus allowing them to exist as a context for future generations (Goodin 1992: 73). His position can easily be included under the banner of ecologism, because there is a concern for the future autonomy of the environment, including the species within it, in relation to people.

Finally, Goodin is keen to point out that the position he articulates is not one in which nature is defended in its absolutely untouched state, but rather that respect should be paid to

the autonomy of nature in how people live. He refers to cases where supposedly natural areas of wilderness have been successfully protected because of the claims of their indigenous inhabitants. He suggests it is far more pragmatic than suggesting that nature and wilderness areas be absolutely untouched, that people behave respectfully towards the environment by recognising the value which inheres in its autonomous unfolding whilst they interact with it. Thus conceived, the environment is valuable because it provides the sphere in which people situate themselves in a wider context. This context sustains both present and future polities that are embedded within this environment, as well as non-human entities which in part constitute the natural value of the environment as something wider than ourselves.

Goodin's theory of the good, then, places a constraint on the individual that nature should be touched '*lightly*' or '*lovingly*' (Goodin 1992: 53 emphasis in original). So, from Goodin's theory of the value of nature, a set of virtues can be derived which describe the character required to fulfil the obligations necessary to properly orientate ourselves towards appreciating this value. And, similar to the ontological arguments discussed above, the conclusion reached is that we are acting virtuously when we adopt a respectful attitude towards the environment; this entails treading lightly with respect to its natural value.

### ***John Barry: Normative sustainability as 'the good'***

John Barry also seeks to politicise ecological arguments by drawing on a green conception of the good and concomitant virtues. I look at Barry's approach as, in both his 1999 and 2012 works, he aims to generate a comprehensive approach to engaging green political thought within social, political and economic practices. Thus, he moves beyond the ontological focus of those eco-centric theorists outlined above and towards a normatively green politics (see 2012:4). In doing so Barry draws on elements of thinking associated with a communitarian approach including, in his 2012 work, Alasdair MacIntyre's notion of the self as fundamentally

vulnerable and the implications of this for a green form of civic republicanism (Barry 2012: Chap2).<sup>9</sup>

In this section, I wish to focus on how Barry draws on a thin conception of the good life and virtues to inform a green politics. Drawing on a thin concept of the good entails using a notion of the good that can accommodate a diverse array of interpretations and can be challenged, but, around which there is broad enough agreement to guide political, social and economic practice. Thin versions of the good are used to avoid being overly conservative, prescriptive and thus anti-democratic.

Barry takes what he calls a negative Aristotelian approach that, ‘... centres on the urgent need to identify and remove those institutional (including cultural) features of modern consumer capitalism, which systematically undermine for example meaningful work, free time and human relationships (as opposed to possessions and consumption), as constitutive elements of a pluralistic (but quasi-objective) account of human flourishing’ (2012:8). Focused on the notion of sustainability (or rather unsustainability) this approach starts by identifying the unsustainable aspects of contemporary politics, economics and society before moving to deconstruct and remove these unsustainable features. Hence, Barry characterises this as a negative Aristotelianism in that this approach starts by identifying actually existing unsustainability before proposing alternatives to challenge an unsustainable culture and its associated practices. In so doing, Barry’s focus here is on broadening conceptions of flourishing and accounts of the good life against the narrowing of the conception of the good under neoliberalism which focuses on economic growth, ‘possessions’ and ‘consumption’. The advantage of this negative Aristotelian approach is that resistance to unsustainability, rather

---

<sup>9</sup> Where I differ from Barry is that whilst I am referring to Macintyre’s construction of the self as dependent on others, including sharing an interdependence with non-human nature, I will also look to the implications of Macintyre’s suggestions for a decentralised deliberative politics of acknowledged dependence for green political thought. In this sense the thesis should be seen as pursuing one avenue of thought from within many of Barry’s insights in these works (see Barry 2012:32).

than the promotion of a particular type of sustainability, can then take many forms and does not assume one perfectionist account of the good (see Barry 2012:12).

In *Rethinking Green Politics* (1999) part of Barry's aim is to argue in favour of a substantive and broad notion of the good as something that informs our interactions with the environment from where it is possible to criticise environmentally destructive attitudes as un-virtuous and undesirable (1999:35). He writes, '...those who destroy nature are motivated by an unnecessarily narrow view of the human good ... In so doing the inherent plurality of the human good is occluded. That is, forms of anthropocentrism which narrow the human good and human interests can be criticized as vices, or potential vices' (Barry 1999:35). In refining the focus on virtues of resilience and developing a green civic republicanism in his 2012 work Barry argues that identifying and tackling social inequalities, insecurities and consumerism entail that, '...private views of the good (or sustainable) conform to some standard or master conceptualization, and it is compatible with a variety of views of the good, so long as they do not threaten or undermine the freedoms and practices of the common public/political life of the community, including the ecological conditions for sustainability.' (2012:270). Furthermore, he argues that, '...we can view dogmatic, inflexible thinking as an ecological vice...' when compared to the flexibility and adaptiveness of *resilience* which permits a broader range of interpretations and responses (2012:100). Thus, we see that Barry very much uses a thin conception of the good in order to describe and guide the character of a republic that is normatively sustainable. This thin version of the good, open to interpretation but encouraging citizens to act against unsustainability, then contrasts with the narrow consumerist good of neoliberalism. For Barry, neoliberalism's inflexible and rigid observance of the good as the pursuit of economic growth is challenged by the much thinner and flexible view of the good with which he characterises resilience as a creative and ecologically sensitive response to conditions of unsustainability. In such way, creative, adaptable, and pluralistic responses are characterised as virtuous whilst unyielding and narrow thinking is cast as vice like.



Taking an Aristotelian approach Barry further sets out particular dispositions of character that count as virtues and vices on this understanding. He links rampant consumerism and debt-based consumerism with the vices of *pleonexia* (intemperance) and *akrasia* (weakness of will) which, he argues, a green republican conception of citizenship should counteract through cultivating virtues such as patience and temperateness (2012:255-256). His argument, then, is for a conception of the communal good that promotes an attitude of responsibility, and thus practices which challenge unsustainability towards the environment as virtuous. This is proposed as an expansion or broadening of an anthropocentric human good rather than its replacement with an entirely eco-centric one.

Thus, Barry utilises the concerns of ecologism to broaden the notion of the good, or challenge narrow conceptions of the good, to steer politics towards adopting ecological responsibility, but without adopting a radical deep ecological position himself (Barry 1999:261). In line with Barry, I would also urge for a broadening of our public understanding of the good life to promote a more responsible attitude towards nature. I also think that in bringing communitarian and green thought together we can retain the ontological arguments about the self of ecologists contra neoliberal views on the self. It is the use of the concept of the good here that demonstrates significant overlap with communitarian approaches to political theory. And, whilst this is in no way a full treatment of Barry's work, I also recognise the importance of Barry's move to re-politicise green politics in the face of the depoliticization associated with neoliberalism. My own contribution will be to focus specifically on what MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelian approach can offer in terms of ontological argument, arguments about the good and, importantly, what a development of MacIntyre's own suggestions for a politics of acknowledged dependence can bring to green political thought.

To return to Barry's argument. By considering eco-centric views of the good at the level of communal political debate, with the possibility of these conceptions of the good shaping communal life, the community can be engaged in debate that challenges the narrow nature of the human good. This then creates the possibility of orientating the public towards a

more responsible relationship with their environments. Opening debate up to alternative views of the good allows our present 'narrowly anthropocentric' notion of the good to give those concerned for the well-being of their communities and environments a chance to influence and expand this narrow collective good.

Andrew Dobson characterises Barry's type of appeal as one of 'normative sustainability' (Dobson 2006: 151). The principles of ecologism are value-driven rather than value-neutral, that is they involve moral argumentation about what is good for ourselves and future generations, and for the environment (Barry 1999: 240); and what we ought to do stems from this argument. In arguing for the merits of a green form of civic republicanism Barry contends that that for greens, '... civic virtue- which may include and even sacrifice one's self interest for the public good- is critical to addressing the environmental problems we face' (2012:232). In this sense, Barry advocates a virtue of resilience both as an acknowledgement of our human vulnerabilities, *a la* MacIntyre as I discuss in chapter 4 onwards, but also as an adaptive response to issues such as climate change (2012:64). To the political ecologist the notion of the good of our environments, in relation to ourselves, should then inform the way in which we think about ourselves in terms of our actions, collective debate and legislation, in order that individuals and polities act in a more environmentally sensitive way.

On this account, the good of our environment in relation to ourselves, future generations and non-human entities, should be realised as a substantive conception, i.e. one which informs policy. In so doing it should act as a rational and justifiable basis for directing our interactions with our environment; rather than simply allowing the environment to be regarded only as a material good to be appropriated by atomistic self-interested individuals, detached from that environment.

I shall examine more fully the ecologist and communitarian accusation levelled against neoliberalism, that its neutrality towards conceptions of the good makes it harder for us to question the value of individuals' present narrow self-interest with regard to their environment, in chapter 2. However, for the purposes of this chapter, it suffices to say that for

ecological political theorists, obligations of the self to the good of its community, in relation to the environment, are what is required for the political ecologist to justify policy which may limit and alter environmental relations between individuals and their environments. This requires democracies to debate and be able to accept substantive consideration of the common good. Barry calls for this type of approach to politics because, in agreement with Goodin, environmental politics is about a conception of the good, a wider valuation of our environment that contests a narrow neoliberal conception of the good in terms of individuals' ability to choose their own ends (Barry 1999: 35, 2012:12).

## ***Conclusion***

I have demonstrated that eco-centric theorists such as Eckersley, Naess, Fox and Mathews, rely on a particular relational and embedded conception of the self. Utilising a relational conception of the self opens the way for these theorists to suggest that we ought to be concerned for non-human entities which comprise our environment, as harms to the environment constitute harms to ourselves. Part of our own self-interest in self-realisation entails that we are concerned for the realisation of other selves which constitute the environment. The use of processes such as identification encourages a cultural realisation that the self is not completely distinct from its environment, physically or mentally, and that the environment itself is comprised of significant other selves. This relocation can be the grounding for a more careful attitude towards the use of the environment in terms of our political practices. In the next chapter, I argue that this conception runs counter to the dominant neoliberal conception of the self qua atomistic preference former, in that it stresses a conception of the self which is constituted through its relationships to others, including non-human entities, within its environment. I will also argue that combining this ontological argument with MacIntyre's communitarianism can further politicise this notion of

interrelatedness, connecting them with a deliberative politics which challenges the hegemony of neoliberalism and seeks to re-politicise questions of identity and the environment.

Secondly, I have shown that green political theorists, other than myself, have pursued the concept of the good as a guide for how we ought to relate to and behave, both individually and collectively, towards our environment in a way similar to that taken by communitarians. Robert Goodin offers us one instance of the use of the good in ecologism in which the role of nature in the environment is to grant meaning to individuals' and communities' lives as a wider context for them. To deny nature this role, by totally subsuming it to human use without considering its independence, is to deny nature its meaning. John Barry argues for a thinner view of the good that can inform political debate and decision making, and so makes a stricter connection between arguments concerning the good and democracy as a means of pursuing these arguments. In doing so they suggest a form of normative sustainability in which citizens are guided in their actions by a substantive though broad conception of the good. Barry (1999; 2012) argues that democracy should involve a debate about the good of a sustainable relationship between ourselves and our environment. This needs to occur at the level of the democratic community in order to legitimate checks on behaviour which fails to respect the environment for reasons other than its use value for existing individuals in western democracies.<sup>10</sup> In a similar fashion, I wish to contribute to this argument that green politics is one which should involve both ontological arguments about the self and which should be about arguments about the good or character of communities. Specifically, I wish to draw on Alasdair MacIntyre's politics of acknowledged dependence.

In the next chapter, I will consider why a synthesis between ecological political thought and MacIntyre's communitarianism is desirable and consider objections from some greens that social forms of liberalism, such as those advocated by Piers Stevens and Marcel Wissenburg, are sufficient to resolve tensions between liberalism and ecologism. In doing so I will pinpoint

---

<sup>10</sup> I contend in chapter 7 that in following MacIntyre's argument this is at the level of the local community.

in more detail the areas of liberalism where there are problematic differences with ecologism.

I will then set out why, beyond identifying the similarities between ecologism and communitarianism set out in this chapter, a synthesis bringing the thought of Alasdair MacIntyre and ecologism together has the potential to move ecologism in the direction of establishing a more normatively green form of democracy than those of neoliberalism.

## Chapter 2

### **What's wrong with liberalism? Communitarian and green perspectives on liberalism and neoliberalism**

#### ***Introduction***

Dobson (2007) charts the emergence of ecologism roughly to the publishing of *The Limits to Growth* report by Meadows et al. in 1974. The report highlighted the finite carrying capacity of the earth, and Meadows suggested that technological solutions alone would not solve the issues of overconsumption, resource degradation, and pollution. Since its emergence ecologism has been critical of the contemporary form of liberalism in western democracies that emphasises the freedom of the individual to consume, and which frames this freedom within the need for economic production and capital surplus to expand. Liberalism itself is a body of theory that is concerned primarily with liberty or freedom and its protection or enhancement. There are, of course, many branches of liberalism including new liberalism, classical liberalism, and republican liberalism. Perhaps the most problematic for greens and communitarians are deontological liberalism and neoliberalism.

Since the 1980s neoliberalism has become dominant across western democracies. In the UK and US, it was promulgated in the 80s by the Thatcher and Regan governments, and has kept hold ever since; in spite of the 2008 financial crisis. David Harvey defines the central feature of this ideology as a proposal that, 'human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills...' within a broader institutional scheme '...characterised by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade' (2005:2). Harvey argues that the state's role is to underpin this system by, 'defending private property rights,' and securing, '... the proper functioning of markets', whilst intervening with markets as little as possible once they are functioning; characterised by a process of deregulation and privatisation. Importantly here, in terms of its direct ecological and social impact, he also

argues that, 'if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary' (Harvey 2005:2).

These features have led to the promotion of economic growth and commodification of nature by governments and large corporate entities, over and above other forms of the good life. This growth is premised upon the extraction of raw materials and their conversion into consumer goods. The expansion of this economic model both globally and into previously public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and government itself, as well as the deregulation of finance; all focused on the creation of wealth measured in terms of capital. Barry (2012) sets out the chief issues for greens here: this position is based upon infinite growth in a finite world; the 'crowding out' of any alternative political economy in presenting itself as a normatively neutral economic doctrine, and hence any other way of relating to nature and each other; and the undemocratic role of financial and 'technical' experts in administering this system (2012:128-145). The dominance of neoliberalism as an economic and political doctrine has made the need for an alternative theoretical approach all the more urgent. So far, ecologism has not been able to provide the kind of political argument to challenge the status of this system. As a result, it is my project to strengthen ecologism's political retort to neoliberalism by incorporating some of the most important conceptual tools of MacIntyre's communitarianism.

This chapter will review the criticisms of deontological liberalism and neoliberalism made by green and communitarian political thinkers. I will break the criticism down into three elements: the first two concern ontological argument about the nature of the self, the third is focused on socio-economic practice. Firstly, ecologism is critical of the deontological rights-based liberalism of Rawls because of its notion of the autonomous individual – a self-contained self that is separate and distinct from its ends. Greens argue that this leads, in practice, to individuals who are narrowly self-interested and who tend to regard nature as something to be acquired and consumed. Secondly, greens are critical of the notion of liberal neutrality: the

idea that there can be no one conception of the good life, certainly not at the level of state decision making. This is because, they argue, in practice, this neutrality defends a prevailing conception of the environment as property for acquisition and consumption. Thirdly, ecologism is critical of neoliberalism whose view of the individual is very much rooted in the individualism of deontological liberalism. Neoliberalism is associated with a laissez faire approach to the economy, the promotion of market mechanisms in providing social goods, and where it intersects with deontological liberalism, a radically individualistic conception of the individual as consumer.

Throughout the first section of the chapter I shall address the objection, proposed by some green liberal thinkers, that ecologism is actually reconcilable with more marginal forms of “social” liberalism, such as that of J.S. Mill, thus, potentially rendering some aspects of liberalism amenable to accommodating ecological concerns.

In relation to the first two criticisms of liberalism, outlined above, I contend that green liberals have a case in arguing that liberalism can, in some form, contain a relational notion of the self and a more flexible approach to discussing the good at the substantive level. However, with respect to the third point, that neoliberalism is the dominant form of actually existing liberalism,<sup>1</sup> I argue that these forms of potentially green, “social”, liberalism are not, in practice, the forms of liberalism that presently dominate or challenge political and economic practices. As such, both an alternative emancipatory critique and alternative practice, rather than ontological argument alone, are required to challenge the environmentally destructive aspects of this dominant liberal ideology and practice.

In the second section of the chapter I will propose that, in agreement with these green liberals who look for a more relational conception of the good and socialised forms of economy, we look to communitarian thinkers for further conceptual and practical resources to

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term “actually existing” here in a similar sense to John Barry (2012:6) who uses the term to identify the reality of unsustainable practices that dominate political, economic and social practices.



support and bolster green aims. Like ecological thinkers, these communitarian authors such as Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair MacIntyre, have also been critical of radical liberal individualism and its promotion of the good of individuals as consumers. However, they, and in particular Alasdair MacIntyre, have also suggested a politics that challenges neoliberalism. Thus, I argue that communitarianism contains both conceptual and practical resources for challenging neoliberalism. I will argue that Alasdair MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelianism can be synthesised with ecologism in developing both an ontological argument and, importantly, a practical alternative to neoliberalism. This is an argument that challenges both the atomistic underpinnings of neoliberalism and is suggestive of a socially embedded form of political economy, more ecologically benign than that of this dominant form of liberalism.

### ***Part One: What's wrong with liberalism? Deontology and neutrality***

I begin by examining two interlinked features of contemporary liberal thought and practice of which eco-political theorists are critical. The first is deontological liberal thought. Predominantly this is the liberalism of Rawls and Nozick that has dominated political theory in the West since the 1970s. Yet it goes back to the enlightenment philosophy of Locke in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Briefly, Nozick's work leans heavily toward the libertarian end of the liberal spectrum. The book for which he is most well-known, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), is an argument in favour of a minimalist conception of the state that draws on the Lockean strand of liberalism. Nozick argues that the role of the state should be very much limited to defending property rights, rights of contract, life, and liberty (Nozick 1999: ix). Nozick's view of the state stems from his presentation of the self as 'separate', such that an individual can pursue their own good in their own way, in which case there is little justification to be found for the self to put the social good before their own. Nozick's view of the state in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* is one in which the individual is a fundamentally distinct entity from others, and that has a view of

the good which is individualised rather than social (Nozick 1999:34). His understanding of the minimal state echoes the way in which we have seen Harvey (2005) characterise the concern of the neoliberal state to defend property rights. The issue here for greens is that Nozick's theory is based on the notion that nature exists solely as property to be appropriated by these discretely conceived individuals.

Rawls wrote *A Theory of Justice* (1971) as an alternative to utilitarian justifications for liberal democratic institutions. Such utilitarian theories relied on the idea of the general public good in order to justify welfare and other distributive schemes within liberal democracies. Rawls wanted to develop a theory of justice that did not depend on utilitarian thinking, in which the individual's freedom could be thought of as secondary to the greater public good.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to capture the idea that politics must come to terms with people's fundamental disagreements about the good life which, from his point of view, are to be considered both as inevitable and possibly irreconcilable. In so doing he referred back to Kantian deontological thinking, which disavows the use of ontological conceptions of the autonomous self as the basis of political thought, to develop a normative framework for liberal political institutions that would regard people's *individual* rights, and freedoms to determine their own ends as paramount. Deontology is, then, attractive for many liberals as, by trying to avoid outlining a conception of the self and dealing in potentially controversial metaphysics, they can construct theories that aspire to a universal appeal to many different individuals. Such a framework for justice would thus respect the plurality of individual's views, avoiding the subordination of their life plans to a general public will.

Ecological political theorists argue that this liberal political theory, which disavows reliance on ontological thought, is actually premised on the ontological notion of an asocial individual. Indeed, the appeal of deontological liberalism to liberals is that the individual is absolutely sovereign and should, therefore, be free from coercion. However ecological political

---

<sup>2</sup> I shall return to these older more "social" forms of liberalism presently in examining claims that liberalism can be sensitised to green concerns.

theorists are concerned that deontological liberal theory tacitly relies on a concept of the self which is radically individualised, narrowly self-interested, and so not readily able to sympathise with interests other than its own.

In reality, there is no escape from ontology, neoliberalism and deontological liberalism do rely on a notion of the atomistic self that is free from constitutive encumberments such as strong ties to family, friends, home, or tradition. Those such as communitarians would, on the other hand, argue that these are precisely the attachments that help to shape the self and establish its concerns and priorities, and so should be considered in political theory and practice (see MacIntyre 1994:220). Where the difference lies, then, is in how much each theory admits these ontological assumptions underpin the shape of their political, social, and economic institutions or norms.

As Hay (2013) argues in relation to the importance of ontology to political theory, 'No political analysis has ever been ontologically neutral'. He contends that ontological assumptions underpin epistemological and methodological choices in political science. Hay argues that ontology matters because, 'whether we choose to conduct our analysis in terms of identities, individuals, social collectivities, states, regimes, systems, or some combination of the above, reflects a prior set of ontological choices and assumptions- most obviously about the character, nature, and, indeed, "reality" of each as ontological entities and (potential) *dramatis personae* on the political stage' (Hay 2013:461). Thus, firstly, ontology is important in determining what we can count as politically relevant in terms of a unit of analysis or explanation. Is it individual humans defending their property rights, or humans defending their dependence on other politically and socially considerable entities, such as their carers or other entities in nature?

Secondly, Hay argues that even when there is an agreement around what agent we are focusing on, in our case here it is the individual, ontological choices significantly affect the content of theories about those entities and, 'hence our expectations about how the political drama will unfold... The substantive content of our ontological individualism will vary

dramatically if we regard actors to be self-serving utility maximisers, on the one hand or altruistic communitarians on the other...' (2013:461). So, what is important is not just what we take to be the fundamental units or actors within analysis in our political, social, or economic theories, but also the attributes and behaviours of those actors.

The deontological liberal impulse to keep the focus off ontological assumptions is part of a wish to avoid holding their theories hostage to an apparent reliance on fixed truths about the nature of the self. In other words, they take an anti-foundational stance preferring not to debate fundamental questions about the nature of selves in their political theories. Whilst, on the other hand, ecologism and communitarianism make explicit that the type of self one talks about in political theory, and assumes in practice, makes a difference to the scope of one's argument. We are then talking of differences in degrees as to how much one political theory overtly draws on and deliberates about the self. We can turn to Barry's discussion, drawing on Ted Benton's arguments, of the significance of 'essential truths' concerning how much the 'facts' about ourselves determine how the self should behave.

Barry (2012:53) and Benton (1994:40) contend that the argument over ontology is one about the *relevance* of the way in which we are biologically constituted in relation to talking about behaviours, social norms, or institutional design. This position is a very useful way of characterising both green and communitarian arguments in relation to those of deontological or neoliberalism. Greens and communitarians argue that these essential characteristics do have an important bearing on the way we should conduct ourselves. Barry stresses the term *relevance*, as both he and Benton contend that to acknowledge these notable features is not the same as committing to some form of biological determinism by virtue of our evolution. Humans are not the same as other species of animals, they are a particular animal with particular forms of flourishing (Barry 2012:54). On the other hand, deontological liberals argue from abstracted first principles derived largely from the notion that the self is sovereign; itself an ontological assumption. Therefore, they miss or, especially in the case of neoliberalism,

occlude other significant social issues, such as the need to learn from each other about how to exercise our freedoms or sustain ourselves through interaction with others.

An example of this kind of green criticism of contemporary liberalism comes from Freya Mathews's conception of the ecological self. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Mathews (1996) argues that deontological liberalism's ontological commitment to a conception of the atomistic individual means that liberal institutions promote individuals whose nature is at root self-interested, in a socially detached egoistic sense, and who, thus, find it difficult to relate to wider non-human nature as having a role in their self-interest.<sup>3</sup> For Mathews, the problem with liberal democracy, in its contractual form (i.e., based on social contract theory, as outlined by John Rawls), is that it relies heavily on a principle of disinterested respect for the self-interest of individuals: this self-interest is conceived as self-rule. It follows that individuals may pursue their own conception of the good for themselves so long as it does not restrict the autonomy of others (Mathews 1996:69). She claims that this apparent lack of a socially based morality, beyond the importance of individual self-rule, acts as a barrier to the realisation of eco-centric values in society. This is because there is no common morality that can be extended to non-human nature (Mathews 1996:69). As such, there is little ethical basis for the protection of non-human nature. The value of nature under deontological liberalism, then, is its instrumental worth as a resource for appropriation, and transformation into capital as a means for individuals to secure their own self-determination.

A detached individualism, in the form of a narrow anthropocentric self-interest, coupled with consumerism and capital accumulation, is then fostered within society. This is to the detriment of individuals who can relate through direct experience and knowledge of one another; thus, the experience of shared substantive interests is limited. This

---

<sup>3</sup> Mathews herself concludes that a society based on communitarian principles is required to foster this understanding and valuing of human relationships to non-human nature (Mathews 1996:66-67).

individualistic/egoistic identity is encouraged by institutions that place individuals in competition with each other in a world of constantly changing relationships (Mathews 1996:72). As a result, in liberal democratic society, the individual is not constituted to be disposed to broad feelings of sympathy, or empathy, that would be required as the motivation for establishing recognition of the value of nature beyond its value as a resource pool from which we can extract or dispose of.

It is important to recognise, however, that historically within the broad liberal tradition there have been debates over the nature of the self and society stemming back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Wissenburg 2006b). Marcel Wissenburg argues that greens have sometimes made the mistake of setting up straw man arguments by accepting contemporary liberal accounts of neutrality, regarding the promotion of the good life, as totally excluding an ecological liberal synthesis (Wissenburg 2006b). I wish to avoid that mistake here by reviewing suggested areas for a liberal/ green synthesis. My caveat, however, is that though these more social forms of liberalism and ecologism may, in part, be reconcilable, greens are not always setting up straw men. Rather the form of liberalism that we are confronted with today is one which does allow and even promotes, environmental destruction and, to adopt John Barry's approach, we must tackle this form of liberalism as it actually exists (see Barry 2012:6). In terms of linking this approach to Barry's, the contemporary liberalism that I refer to is then deontological or neoliberalism and its unsustainable practices. Barry uses the phrase 'actually existing unsustainability' to bring attention to, '...the identification of those underlying causes for the continuation of that unsustainability or unsustainabilities...' (2012:6), which he points to as being the ideology and political economy of contemporary or neoliberalism.<sup>4</sup> As such, whilst I am sympathetic to looking for a reconciliation between liberal and green ideologies, I do not think that greens are setting up arguments for the sake of arguments in their critique of

---

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion at the beginning of this chapter and Barry (2012:5-6 & Chapter 4)

what is currently a dominant neoliberalism. Before supporting this position, I will return to examine the possibility of a more relational liberal individual.

Returning to the ontological arguments of green liberals, Gus diZerega discusses the notion of the sympathetic individual in liberal thought, under the category of what he terms 'evolutionary liberalism' (diZerega 1997:73). This type of liberalism sees individuals as embedded in society, and uses the idea of sympathy, developed by the Scottish enlightenment thinkers David Hume and then Adam Smith, to describe how individuals have a conception of their self, and their self-interest, that is formed in relation to other individuals. This bears a close resemblance to how eco-centric political theorists, such as Mathews, describe the self as constituted in relation to non-human nature, whereby non-human nature is recast as a larger community to which human individuals belong. Drawing on this conception of the self, liberal democratic theory may be able to find a more sympathetic place for the non-human natural world, beyond its purely instrumental value, to encompass the appreciation of its value in informing individual's sense of self and self-interest.

DiZerega argues that, from an ontological perspective, we have the capacity to extend our sympathy to non-human entities (1997:68). Humans are still distinct from non-human beings, in that it is we who have this capacity to expand our sympathies to other entities as part of understanding ourselves and furthering our self-interest in the wider environment. In such a way, a regard for our own rational self-interest can be connected to a regard for non-human interests (see also Hayward 1998:113).<sup>5</sup> Thus, diZerega argues, evolutionary liberalism can connect the self in liberal thought with the self in ecological thought and its valuing of non-human nature, with a guiding ethic that, 'The most complete expression of our individuality is a loving relationship with all beings' (diZerega 1997:67-68). Or, if we take John Barry and Tim

---

<sup>5</sup> I concur with seeing that it is humans who are the appreciators of value and of this enlightened anthropocentric approach. I demonstrate this in my own argument for taking a more communitarian approach towards environmental politics that sees the individual as the appreciator of value whilst arguing that our values are in significant part socially shaped.

Hayward's conceptions, our individual integrity is realised through respectful relationships with non-human nature (Barry 1999:71; Hayward 1998:118).

Similarly, arguing from another liberal green perspective, Avner de-Shalit points to historic liberal campaigns, such as the abolition of slavery, as past indication of liberalism's scope for promoting greater environmental sensitivity. He writes:

... while liberals in the nineteenth century wished to protect the vulnerable, that is, the potential victims of modernity and progress, environmentalists towards the end of the twentieth century still protect the victims of modernity, but unlike the progressive forces in the nineteenth century, they extend the circle of protection to include the natural environment. (de-Shalit 1995:389)

Alongside this, he points to the liberal notion of toleration to demonstrate how liberalism has been a precondition, to use Dobson's phrase (see Dobson 2006), for the emergence of green challenges to our practices towards the environment (de-Shalit 1995:389). That is, liberalism's toleration for the preferences of individuals has enabled the emergence of a prominent discourse that is concerned about environmental problems. As such, it can be argued that these social forms of liberalism, identified by de-Shalit and diZerega, offer fertile ground for promoting a greener liberalism. Social forms of liberalism, that draw on relational conceptions of the self, are arguably more compatible with ecological political values than Mathews has argued. With a more relational conception of the self than the atomistic individualism of Rawls or Nozick, these green social liberals can provide grounds for sympathy with non-human entities, and they can account for individuals who value their connections with non-human nature (diZegera1997:62).

It is important to point out that this strand of social liberalism is by no means dominant in contemporary Western society. Rather contemporary liberalism is criticised by communitarians, such as Sandel and MacIntyre, and ecological political theorists, such as



Mathews and Eckersley, for actively promoting socially detached, atomistic individuals. These individuals, both communitarians and greens argue, are conceived of as having a narrow self-interest that is both corrosive of social cohesion and detrimental to the environment. They are also critical of this narrowly individualistic conception of the individual as it bars any collective reorientation towards nature. They contend that this is through the prominence of the concept of neutrality, with respect to the good life, in substantive decision making in liberal democracies. I would also argue that it is precisely the contemporary view of individualism, the individual qua consumer and independent preference former, coupled with this liberal neutrality, which inhibits the process of adapting collectively to mitigate our environmental destruction. And so, it is to green criticisms of liberal neutrality that we now turn to see whether greens have been too rigid in their assessment of liberalism.

The second of the key features of liberalism that draws criticism from ecological thought is the concept of liberal neutrality. The concept of neutrality is important to liberalism as it is an extension of the deontological principle that the right is prior to the good. That is, in order that the sovereign individuals of deontological liberalism be able to pursue their own good life, the state must be neutral regarding conceptions of the good when determining policy formation. The importance of the idea of neutrality, regarding conceptions of the good in liberal democratic political theory, arises primarily out of American liberal political thought in the 1970s (Goodin, Reeve 1989:1; de-Shalit 2000:83). In some ways, it is a misleading characterisation of how the liberal democratic state orientates itself to conceptions of the good life. This is a criticism often levelled at contemporary liberal theorists such as Rawls by communitarian critics of liberal ideology.

For example, Jeremy Waldron, whose own work sits within the liberal tradition, argues that the liberal state is not actually neutral with regards to the good life (1989:79). Rather the principles of justice are intrinsically biased towards individualistic conceptions of the good, and the distribution and valuing of primary goods, required by this type of abstract individual

(Waldron 1989:79). In such a way, liberal theory is only neutral between individualistic conceptions of the good and, because of this narrowly individualistic basis, it actively discriminates against conceptions of the good life that rely on a more communal/relational conception of the self, outlined above. As a result, liberal thought precludes thinking about the environment's constitutive relationship to the self and society at the substantive democratic level. Thus, the possibility of shaping the character of a liberal democracy based upon alternative relations to, and conceptions of, nature is largely excluded. Even if diZerega's ontological argument, that liberalism can accommodate a more relation ontology, holds, it appears liberal commitments to neutrality remain a barrier for entertaining the significance of our interrelations at the collective level.

In fact, the predominant liberal conception of non-human nature is that it is a resource to be consumed, in accordance with the constraints of justice, to allow individuals to subsist and ensure their individual autonomy. This conception of nature, extending back to the enlightenment thinking of John Locke, follows from the central liberal concern that the individual should be allowed to determine his or her own life plan, free from external coercion (Waldron 1989:79). That is, deontological liberalism tends to promote negative liberty- or freedoms from coercion. This is over and against positive liberty - or positive duties and responsibilities to cultivate the condition in which life plans can be realised (Wissenberg 2006:31).

The result is that liberal democracy respects the conception of individual's good lives, but with the prioritisation of the good of individual self-determination and the values and primary goods which attach to this conception, over communal conceptions and requirements of the good life required to realise political ecological values. We will also see Charles Taylor argue this point from a communitarian stance in the later part of the chapter.

Like Waldron, Piers Stephens also identifies enlightenment philosopher John Locke as a significant source of liberal thought hostile to ecological thinking. Stephens states that Locke has a conception of human freedom as human productive and transformative forces exercised over non-human nature (Stephens 2001:6). In this way, the good of a liberal democracy is the promotion of the freedom of human productive and transformative powers and associated resources and liberties. Liberal neutrality is then shown to be linked with a particular conception of liberty, that is, freedom to exercise one's labour upon nature. In doing so, Stephens argues, this notion of neutrality is tied to a conception of the primary goods with which it seeks to support this type of freedom (Stephens 2001:7). In other words, to defend one's freedom to take part and enjoy the fruits of one's labour, and to ensure the exercise of acquisitive freedom, the liberal state needs to ensure that people have fair access to nature. In the process of ensuring fair access to non-human nature, nature is conceived as a material resource to be secured by way of property rights over land and resources. The liberal state then ensures that these rights over nature as material property are defended. The state actively prioritises concerns that need to be addressed to promote the exercise of this type of freedom to transform material, as property, into commodity. As such, nature is defined as an instrumental resource to be appropriated by individuals to ensure their continued autonomy as producers and consumers. Thus, neutrality in a liberal democratic state actively defends the instrumental use of nature if this conception of freedom is considered.

### ***Is liberalism necessarily against the green good life?***

It would stand to reason that liberal neutrality and normative ecologism cannot mix with regards to liberalism's view of the good, however, there are some less influential versions of liberalism that do draw upon notions of the good at the substantive level. Marcel Wissenberg argues that liberalism can be greened if negative liberty is no longer '...seen as the supreme criterion of a good society' (Wissenberg 2006:31). In other words, liberalism should accept

limits to its neutrality, concerning the notion of the good life, if we are to start to weigh up rival views of the good life at the substantive level. To illustrate this, we can turn to Stephens' arguments for liberal democracy to substantively consider the good.

Stephens, like diZegera above, refers to John Stewart Mill's view of individual freedom as the most important value of the liberal state but gives a much different description of this value than the contemporary understanding. For Stephens, Mill's work offers common ground on which to enjoin ecological political theorists (Stephens 2001:10; also see Barry 1999:250). Freedom and toleration of individual plans are defended by Mill, with the purpose of not ruling out any possible truths in society (Mill 1996:637; Stephens 2001:10). In this case, ecological conceptions of the good may be taken into fuller consideration at the level of democratic decision making and policy formation. Like Locke, Mill has a notion of what social progress should consist in. However, rather than economic growth and domination of nature as an expression of freewill, Mill advocates reaching an economically steady state to enable the flourishing of moral culture and social progress (Stephens 2001:10, 2015:62). According to Mill, the democratic state should allow the development of the self by the self, emphasising that it is what the individual chooses as his or her mode of life that is what is of primary importance (Mill in Stephens 2001:11; Mill 1996:637-638). Furthermore, this self-development is to be grounded in different experiences and the exercise of judging and choosing one's own plan of life, for one's self, based on these experiences (Mill 1996: 638-639). Referring to diZegera's phrase 'evolutionary liberalism' to describe Mill's conception of liberalism, Stephens sees this conception as encompassing a relational self, open to experiencing its connections with wider non-human nature, and thus, appreciating its value (Stephens 2001:12).

In a liberal democratic state, from Stephens' point of view, the notion of neutrality does not imply the separation of the comprehensive good of individuals from political debate and decisions. Rather, this notion of neutrality is determined by the conceptions of freedom and individual agency held by different liberal democratic theories (Stephens 2001:12). Liberal

neutrality, Stephens argues, can then be interpreted in a different light to that of deontological liberalism. Liberty instead can be conceived as the exercise of moral and cultural self-development of the community; with economic development being a mode of facilitating this freedom, rather than the expression of negative liberty. Moreover, Mill established that we should maintain the freedom to experience the world in diverse ways and to choose between differing experiences to inform our life plans (Mill 1996:638). Thus, liberal democracy, in its more socially based conception, can accommodate the freedom and values of a self that can experience and relate to others and non-human nature. As such, the good of human-nature relationships may be considered in democratic debate and decision making through deliberation and defence of these relational individual's conceptions of the good.

However, whilst they present attractive ontological alternatives like those of ecologism, none of the social forms of liberalism that these authors refer to is the form of liberalism that is dominant today and to which I will turn next. There has been further entrenchment of neoliberal ideology and practice in response to the financial crisis of 2008 as a way of managing western democratic societies. I do not wish to reject these green social liberal alternatives, particularly as they demonstrate the usefulness of taking an enlightened anthropocentric approach to thinking about eco-political issues. However, even though these social forms of liberalism tackle the theoretical, ontological, underpinnings of liberalism they are still faced with the politics of a hegemonic neoliberalism, that continues to draw on the radical individualistic assumptions of liberalism combined with an active promotion of free markets and consumerism. Thus, although I am sensitive to Wissenburg's cautioning against setting up straw man arguments, it appears that we are not currently challenged by a social liberalism outlined above. Whilst I accept that a social form of liberalism could be greened the actual form of liberalism that has become entrenched is that of neoliberalism. What is required as a way of countering this hegemony are both ontological and political arguments.

## ***Neoliberalism***

My focus up until now has been on green critiques of liberal deontology and neutrality. The next area of critique is neoliberalism. I argue that the dominant form of contemporary liberalism that greens are faced with is neoliberalism, rather than those social forms of liberal thought outlined above by Wissenburg and Stephens. The term neoliberalism is heavily contested (see Glendening 2015, Jessop 2013, Venugopal 2015). Venugopal (2015), in particular, points out that neoliberalism tends to be used as a catchall term to encompass forms of political and economic practices in the west to which the left and other critics are opposed. The use of the term 'neoliberal', in ecological political thought, tends to emerge when there is reference to political economy. We can see this in the writing of Barry (1999, 2012) and Kenis and Lievens (2013) for example. As such, neoliberalism, in green writing, tends to denote a critique of liberal political economy within western liberal democracies, whilst within communitarian thought, reference tends to be made to the hegemony of free-market thinking in ethical and political life (Sandel 2012 for example). In this thesis, as in ecological political thought, I shall refer to neoliberalism when talking about the ideas and political economy of contemporary liberalism. In this sense, I see neoliberalism as, in part, rooted in the individualism of deontological liberalism, and promoting a conception of the individual as consumer and individual preference former through predominantly free market institutions. In what follows I will clarify what I take to mean by neoliberalism by turning, as John Barry also does from a green perspective (See Barry 2012:119), to Foucault. In his lectures on biopolitics Foucault succinctly describes neoliberalism as the political practice of allowing the free market, or free market principles, to define the character of the state within western liberal democracies:

... instead of accepting a free market defined by the state and kept as it were under state supervision-which was, in a way, the initial formula of liberalism: let us

(promoters of neoliberalism) establish a space of economic freedom and let us circumscribe it by a state that will supervise it- the ordoliberals [neoliberals] say we should completely turn the formula around and adopt the free market as organizing and regulating principle of the state, from the start of its existence up to the last form of its interventions. In other words: a state under the supervision of the market rather than a market supervised by the state (Foucault 2008: 116).

Foucault sees neoliberalism as a practice in which government is self-limiting in its interference in social and economic life (Foucault 2008:20). In so doing the contemporary liberal democratic state allows market principles to define social, political and economic life. It is very much this sense of the term that those greens who are opposed to the commodification of nature imply, as I have demonstrated in the previous chapter and will reaffirm in the latter part of this chapter. This neoliberalism, as the dominant form of liberalism, is charted to have emerged by Foucault in post-war Germany as part of its redevelopment in which the new German democratic state stepped back from determining prices and then followed a trajectory of allowing the market to self-regulate (Foucault 2008:81). For Foucault neoliberalism is the methodology by which the liberal capitalist state manages the freedoms of its citizenry. Neoliberalism sees the free market as the sphere through which liberty is achieved. Others, such as David Harvey, chart the emergence of neoliberalism to Chile, under Pinochet, in which the ideas of the Chicago school of thought were deployed to enable the free market and to re-empower its capitalist class (Harvey 2005:16). Where Harvey, Foucault and other more recent theorists converge, is on the significant part of the Chicago school of thought in promoting the scaling back of the state, deregulation and the expanded role of the free market to Western states that in turn deploy this model in global development (see also Venugopal 2014, Peet 2003). Neoliberalism was effectively promoted in the UK and US by Reagan and Thatcher and has been associated with the rolling back of the state, increasing privatisation and global trade

liberalisation. It is the ideology that has underpinned globalisation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (see Harvey 2005).

Neoliberalism then contains its own view of the economy. It sees free markets and capital as the most effective mechanisms through which goods and material can be allocated throughout liberal democratic societies, and indeed throughout the world in its globalising aspect. The neoliberal economy is based upon the scaling back of public ownership and an expansion of private ownership. One of the key problems for green political thought is that neoliberal thinking dominates in most western institutional and public thinking about the environment and the role of markets, consumption, and growth. This is despite the fact that the 2008 financial crisis, for a time, slowed down economic growth and correspondingly the consumption of natural resources. Economic growth, based upon material consumption of the environment, remains, therefore, the key ambition of liberal democracies.

Neoliberalism as a political project promotes free-market capitalism as the economic model in which liberal democracy is to be situated. This is, in some part, because the consumer choice driven economy sits well with the liberal notion of the self as private preference former and individual liberty maximiser. The economy becomes a sphere in which consumers can express their individual freedoms without the apparent coercion of states, oligarchies or monopolies. Capital becomes a tool that individuals, conceived of as individual preference formers and satisfiers, as per the contemporary liberalism outlined above, utilise to realise their freedoms and own views of the good life.

Both ecological political thought and communitarianism contain critiques of neoliberalism and the operation of the neoliberal capitalist economy. From the point of view of ecological political thought, neoliberalism is problematic: firstly, because of its objective of continued economic growth within a finite world, and secondly, because of its valuation of nature as a material resource for private ownership, appropriation, and consumption (Dobson 2008:69, 73). Thus, a critique both of the theory and practice of neoliberalism is needed.



This critique of neoliberalism may imply that ecologism could be a form of socialism. However, many eco-centric greens would not uncritically accept this positioning. Whilst ecologism contains within it a critique of liberal individualism it is also critical of what Dobson terms 'industrialism' (Dobson 2008:22). Eco-centric political theory is critical of any economic arrangement that is fundamentally destructive of its resource base, including that of the industrialised former-Soviet states. In this vein, the recent argument against neoliberalism, from a green perspective, has developed to criticise and unpick its hegemony within political and economic thinking. Critics have focused particularly on the de-politicisation of both the economy and the environment under neoliberalism (see Kenis and Lievens 2015, Magdoff and Bellamy Foster 2011 and Newell 2012 for example). They are critical of a broad acceptance of neoliberal thinking with regards to social and economic problems and a closing down of alternative framings and practices of those social and economic issues. Their critique centres on the hegemony of neoliberal free market expansion, deregulation, privatisation of the commons, as well as the monetisation of the value of nature. These green critics argue that the extent of this hegemony is that, as well as being a driver of environmental destruction, neoliberal market-based solutions are themselves posed as a salve to environmental problems (see Kenis and Lievens 2015 Barry 1999:172, 2012:64 for example). As such dominant thinking about the environment is done almost entirely through a neoliberal lens. A lens through which environmental problems are not conceived of as issues about the nature of our relationships to the non-human world, but rather as non-political technical issues to be solved through market mechanisms.

The neoliberal technical solution to ecological problems is ecological modernisation. This is the notion that increases in efficiency of production and consumption brought about by market competition and increased resource scarcity will bring about more environmentally benign production and consumption. Kenis and Lievens (2016) argue that greens should be concerned about this. The neoliberal free market, driven by profit and self-interest, by its very

nature will never be benign with regards to human-nature relations. They argue that it is dangerous to uncritically accept environmental issues as purely technical issues. This is because to accept that neoliberalism as the solution to socio-ecological issues masks, deepens and entrenches the environmental and social harms caused at the local, regional and global scale by neoliberal economies.

In arguing against this neoliberal hegemony over the environment, they characterise their work as an argument against post-political thinking. Their argument is a critique of an acceptance of neoliberalism as the only ideological and practical game in town for dealing with political problems (See Kenis and Lievens 2016: chapter 2, Magdoff and Bellamy Foster 2011: chap 5); even in the continuing aftermath of the global financial crisis.<sup>6</sup>

Kenis and Lievens's critique of neoliberalism describes capital as continually transcending barriers and transforming nature into monetary value, in its acquisition and consumption (Kenis and Lievens 2016: chapter 3). Thus far, each time capitalism, even before neoliberalism, has found an ecological limit it has adapted to avoid collapse. For example, soil nutrients were badly depleted throughout rural England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of increasingly intensive farming practices. Rather than reverse these practices, guano imported from South American islands was imported to make up the shortfall. Subsequently, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, artificial fertilisers were created that enabled intensive farming practices, in pursuit of profit, to continue (Kenis and Lievens 2006:47). As such, capitalism has evolved to outwit ecological crises from undermining its basis, but in doing so it drives forward further ecological crises that denigrate the dispossessed and the disenfranchised. As Kenis and Lievens point out,

---

<sup>6</sup> Post-political thought as a mode of analysis has emerged at the end of the 1990s subsequently to the collapse of the Eastern bloc. It critiques the dominance of neoliberal capitalism in the west following the diminishment of socialism. Broadly speaking for theorists of post politics such as Mouffe (2005), Žižek (2002), and Swyngedow (2000) amongst others identify the foreclosing of politics as competing challenges over ideology and its replacement with governance on a neoliberal model. This entails the shifting of substantive debate from issues of ideological importance onto a plurality of discourses about personal preferences (see Swyngedow 2007:23 for example). This then leads to the dominance of neoliberal institutions being left effectively unchallenged allowing the ongoing management of populations.

increasing efficiency in industry does not necessarily mean a decoupling of the economy from consumption of nature as the economy shifts from material production to one based on knowledge and services. Rather it can, and often does, mean increased consumption as other needs and wants are met and engineered (Kenis and Lievens 2006:57).

Under neoliberalism, capitalism promoted through the state, itself determined by free market logic, has continued and expanded the valuation of nature as potential capital globally. Ecological political theorists such as Kenis and Lievens are critical of the notion of ecological modernisation in which sustainable development is viewed as a solution to ecological problems. They point out that the concept of 'sustainable development' is a contradiction in terms. They argue that each time an ecological problem such as resource scarcity is resolved, usually by finding another element of nature to consume, the demand necessary to drive economic growth entails more consumption and further ecological degradation. In other words, more efficient production and consumption facilitate more consumption of the environment, qua natural resource, rather than less.

In contrast to the growth-orientated neoliberal economy, green political theory often posits steady state economies as alternatives. Daly and Cobb (1990), Kenis and Lievens (2016), Magdoff and Bellamy Foster (2011), Barry (1999, 2012) amongst others, argue in favour of re-politicising the de-politicised environment to engender political activity. They argue that the roots of environmental problems cannot be addressed through market mechanisms as it is social relations such as class and gender relations, amongst others, which need to be reflected upon and changed. This includes the way in which neoliberal democracy increasingly leaves environmental problems to the individual private sphere, rather than seeing them as problems of collective action. Barry (1999 & 2012) argues against free market environmentalism as a solution to environmental issues. He is in favour of 're-embedding' the economy within social relations, re-establishing commons and putting democratic decision making and accountability back into the market (Barry 1999:184). Barry terms this solution 'collective ecological

management'. In his 2012 book, Barry argues extensively for establishing a green political economy, which includes sharing, collective provisioning, and consumption, to rival the market and state, '...creating more people-centred and socially embedded economic practices' (Barry 2012:213-214).

I will return to these recommendations for a green democracy that publicly, rather than privately, regulates its economic metabolism, as it were, in chapter 7 when I examine MacIntyre's missing politics. But it is important to note here that part of MacIntyre's project is also about re-embedding the economy within society alongside enabling open deliberation about the character of communities. I would argue that MacIntyre's decentred deliberative approach sits well with the notion of re-politicising environmental issues and questioning dominant assumptions about the nature of our environmental relations. As such I will examine the communitarian field that MacIntyre is characterised as hailing from. I do so because it looks as though communitarianism contains resources not just for critiquing neoliberal theory and its ontological assumptions, but also alternatives to its practices.

From a green liberal perspective, Wissenburg (2006b) argues that the green/liberal incompatibility argument i.e., that there are irreconcilable ontological differences and differences about a politics of the common good -- is in some ways arbitrary and excludes dialogue between the two families of thought. Wissenburg argues that greens sometimes set up straw man arguments by being selective as to the type of liberalism to which they compare green values. Greens hostile to a synthesis between liberalism and green political thought often look at the modern concept of liberal neutrality, with respect to the ordering of goods and the good life. For Wissenburg these theorists make the mistake of taking a particular instance of liberal thought to represent the whole body of a family, or what he terms a hoard of political thought (Wissenburg 2006b:139).

I do not wish to set up incompatibility arguments for the sake of it; it is important to acknowledge that there are forms of liberalism which may be reconcilable to a green perspective. My argument here is that whilst this may be possible, and indeed desirable, the form of liberalism described by those who see ecologism and liberalism as theoretically compatible, such as diZerege (1997) and Stephens (1991), is not the form of liberalism which actually exists: neoliberalism. Hence, what is required is a critique from out with liberalism that not only challenges the ontological assumptions of neoliberalism but also proposes political, social and economic practices that are viable alternatives to those embraced by neoliberals. I now turn to communitarianism to look at how their critique of contemporary liberalism is suggestive of resources for ecologism.

## ***Part Two: Communitarianism and Ecologism***

I will now turn to examining the similarities between the ecological and communitarian critiques of liberalism. Like green social liberals and ecologists, communitarians are critical of the liberal conception of the self as separate from its wider communal interests. And, like ecologism, communitarians are critical of the notion that liberal politics tends to be about defending the good of narrowly self-interested individuals, rather than concerned with collective notions of the good. I will argue that this area is where communitarianism moves beyond social liberalism to a critique of contemporary liberal ideology and practice, (or praxis) and where we may find suggestions for alternatives to those neoliberal practices.

Relative to an ecological political position concerned with the moral considerability of wider non-human nature, anthropocentric communitarianism does often sit close to a liberal position.<sup>7</sup> However, Sandel, Taylor, and MacIntyre are all critical of liberalism, albeit on

---

<sup>7</sup> It is important to acknowledge that most of the thinkers labelled communitarian, such as Sandel and MacIntyre, do not refer to themselves as communitarians. The label stems largely from the work of Mulhall and Swift (1996) *Liberals and Communitarians* in which they characterise this set of theorists' thinking in distinction to Rawlsian liberalism. Communitarians such as Sandel and MacIntyre qualify their positions individually. In this thesis I shall expand on their particular views. The label communitarian is

differing points, such that they certainly do not align with the contemporary Rawlsian view of liberalism in which the atomistic individual is made paramount. Whilst they are anthropocentric all three theorists refer to Aristotelian notions of the common good and virtue as part explanation and part normative call for morality to be central to public political life<sup>8</sup>. They also advocate the use and importance of ontological argument, concerning the nature of the self, in political thought. I will argue that MacIntyre's attention to the individual as dependent and his suggestions for a politics that reflects this dependence makes him a strong candidate as an ally for ecological political theory.

### ***Communitarianism and the relational self***

Communitarianism aligns with ecological political thought in so far as it questions the nature of the self at the root of political and social theory and practice. Much like ecological political theory, communitarian thought draws on a notion of the self that is constituted through its relations to others. In other words, the self in communitarianism, just like that of ecologism, can identify and consider its own ends and interests as part of those of others. In such a way, both ecologism and communitarianism call for a reconsideration of the nature of the self, in politics and society, as they both argue that the nature of the self is important in shaping both political theory and practice. This runs counter to Rawlsian deontological liberal theory.

Michael Sandel's *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1984) dissects and challenges the methodology, in particular, the use of the hypothetical veil of ignorance, in Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1999) and its revision in his *Political Liberalism* (1993). Sandel regards Rawls's methodology as problematic in the context of any search for the common good and as

---

useful though as I agree with Mulhall and Swift that there are common themes. These are themes such as advocacy of ontological argument in political thought, which bring these theorists together and indeed, as I argue in this thesis, link them to ecological political thought.

<sup>8</sup> MacIntyre's background is one of Marxist Aristotelianism, although his brand of Marxism is deeply critical of traditional Marxism post Stalinist USSR and rather reflects new left thinking of the 1960s onwards. This Marxism is coupled with a heavy influence of the thinking of Thomas Aquinas on Aristotle and the virtues. I shall explore MacIntyre's arguments further in chapter 4 but first I wish to return to what I take to be a communitarian position.

restrictive of the possibilities of a truly democratic politics. Sandel comments that, 'Liberalism teaches respect for the distance of self and ends... By putting the self beyond the reach of politics, it makes human agency an article of faith rather than an object of continuing attention and concern.... and it forgets the possibility that when politics goes well, we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone' (Sandel 1998:183).

Much like Mathews's green ontological argument about the nature of self, communitarians such as Sandel claim that people and their values and commitments are not separable, nor are people totally separable from their communities (Sandel 1984:90). To separate selves from their ends is to deny the individual a meaningful personality, a moral compass, and to deny them a shared interest in wider cooperative endeavours of society. Further, to Sandel, leaving out the community and wider relationships to which the self belongs in political thought, is a methodological error; relationships and communal practices are key to explaining the self as a political agent capable of meaningful decision-making and agency.

Just like Mathews's does from an ecological perspective and much like the green social liberals, Sandel argues that Rawls, contrary to his deontological method, does, in fact, rely on a substantive world view. This is a comprehensive view of the good and a specific ontology of the self, that is adopted in his theory of justice. Sandel calls Rawls's ontological construction of the individual 'the unencumbered self'. He argues that Rawls's methodology assumes that the self and its ends are separable; that selves can be thought of as distinct from the values they hold, and the life plans they follow (Sandel 2010: 145).

Sandel argues that this metaphysics impacts upon and influences the types of freedom individuals within liberal democracies may experience. On Rawls's account, individuals ought to pursue their own conceptions of the good without influencing the views, plans, and actions of others through normative political means. Thus, politics cannot be used as a means for the pursuit of the common good. This, Sandel would say, transforms politics from the pursuit of

the common good into the defence of a radical individualism, that amounts to a comprehensive liberal world view.

Sandel then accuses Rawls of methodological individualism and suggests that he ought to acknowledge the normatively active nature of the methodology used to demonstrate the desirability of political liberalism, meaning that his theory actually does promote a particular view of the good life: 'As a person's values and ends are always attributes and never constituents of the self, so a sense of community is only an attribute and never a constituent of a well-ordered society' (Sandel 1998:64). Sandel felt Rawls's theory, far from promoting a state that was neutral regarding substantive notions of the good, promoted highly-individualised modes of the good life which were debilitating of substantive recognition of any sort of larger communal, collective good. Again, we have seen this argued, from Mathews's green perspective above, when she argues that the narrow liberal ontological view closes down the realisation of interests in non-human nature which may be recognisable by us. Such constructions draw on a view of liberty as being primarily about the ability to pursue one's own good over any collective views of the good life. From Sandel's communitarian point of view, Rawls's theory fails to question the desirability of individualism itself. Rawls then makes the error of ignoring the collectivities and collective actions that are required to sustain individuals and their freedoms.

Other communitarian thinkers, such as Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre, take up the challenge of articulating conceptions of the self that are alternative to the individualistic individual of contemporary liberalism. They cite examples from ancient philosophy, with MacIntyre drawing on Aristotelian notions of teleology (the notion that human's identity *qua* human is bound up with the ends we pursue). MacIntyre argues that the individual can only achieve its own conception of the good by reference to the norms and traditions of its community: 'For I am never able to seek the good or exercise the virtues *qua* individual...we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity' (MacIntyre, 1994: 220).



Taylor similarly looks at how individual's conceptions of self are always necessarily socially constructed; they understand themselves by reference to communal understandings embedded in language, thought and practice. He writes, 'One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it... a powerful modern aspiration to freedom and individuality has conspired to produce an identity which seems to be a negation of this.' (Taylor 1994:35). For Taylor, our shared languages, the thoughts, and ideas that we exchange and can mutually refer to are what frame the identity of the self - they are what enable the self to express its being to others and thus to create itself in society. Thus, for him, the self is an inherently social phenomenon - an idea that is somewhat missing in contemporary liberal individualism and its concern with autonomy and choice. These communitarian positions appear at odds with the atomistic notion that the self is concerned with its own liberty.

Communitarians argue that when it comes to thinking about politics, ontological constructions, such as those posed by Taylor above, are important. Contrary to Rawls's efforts to do away with metaphysics or ontological statements from political thought, communitarians argue that ontologies play a determining role in the shaping of political theory. Communitarians argue that in his own account doing away with ontology, Rawls has actually valorised a conception of the self, in theory, and practice, which is concerned to promote only its own distinct view of the good. The problem, as communitarians such as Taylor see it, is that ontologies play a vital role in thinking about and determining the shape of our political institutions and that the liberal conception of the self, as detached from society and focused on its narrow self-interest, debilitate the politics of the common good.

### ***Communitarianism and a politics of the common good***

Communitarianism and ecologism share a second criticism of contemporary liberalism. They argue that by tacitly, or overtly, assuming that we all simply want our political systems to be

fair, in the sense of assigning us the right to live our private lives as we wish, (with equal access to the distributive and regulatory systems that enable a basic level of well-being), politics as a communal endeavour is left out of the picture. By stating that the right should be prior to the good and the good subject to the right, the good life is confined to the private sphere of the individual. As Sandel so effectively puts it, this ignores the possibility of politics being about the common good; that politics is at its best when people come together, collectively, in the public sphere to solve problems which the democratic community faces (Sandel 1998:64). Liberal political thinking, and its wariness about subjecting one another to comprehensive views of the good, places the politics of the common good of the community beyond reach.

Thus far it is still possible to argue that we are still in the territory occupied by those social green liberals above. Communitarians are simply proposing a more social form of self to underpin liberal political thought, albeit a very socialised form distinct from today's liberalism. However, what moves communitarianism beyond social liberalism, as a potential reserve of possibilities for green political thought, is that it also contains suggestions as to how to enable these more socially aware individuals. Thus, there may be potential suggestions as to furthering a politics that is also more sensitive to our multiple ecological connections. In particular, Alasdair MacIntyre sets himself apart as having thought about how to frame our wider interdependencies in political thought and, importantly, hinted at how this may come about in practice.

Communitarian theory has explored possible configurations of political practice that draw upon the value of the community in sustaining liberty and promoting democratic society. This is a current that has been present from the start of communitarian thought but that needed to be made clearer in the face of criticism from political theorists such as Susan Moller Okin (1989). The criticism is that communitarianism implies some form of radical conservatism, with individuals trapped in the norms of the traditions of which they found themselves a part of, and are thus, unable to critique the practices of their society from an alternative standpoint. Communitarians, such as Charles Taylor, see some form of civic republicanism as

the desirable form that a democracy should adopt. In this conception an individual's duties to uphold democracy are emphasised as necessary for their individual liberty: 'A free society, which thus needs to call on a strong spontaneous allegiance from its members, is eschewing the indispensable basis of this strong citizen identification around a sense of the common good - what I have been calling "patriotism"' (Taylor 1991:173).

Importantly, MacIntyre distances himself from the patriotism of Taylor to argue for a radically decentred form of deliberative democracy against the instrumentalising practices of the state and corporations. MacIntyre wishes to see face to face deliberative democratic communities of practice grow in order to emancipate individuals from the managerial practices of state and corporation. Such democracies, he argues, exist at levels of localised practice, such as within factories or universities with their own particular traditions and self-understandings. He recognises that much more research needs to be done on communities which exhibit structures that enable citizens to develop and contribute to a shared conception of the good life. As examples, he gives, 'farming cooperatives in Donegal, Mayan towns in Guatemala and Mexico, some city-states from a more distant past...', commenting that, 'What such comparative studies will bring home to us is both the variety of social forms within which networks of giving and receiving can be institutionalized and the variety of ways in which such networks can be sustained and strengthened or weakened and destroyed' (MacIntyre 1999:143). It is in this form that criticism of contemporary liberal political and economic life makes MacIntyre's communitarianism seem attractive from an ecological point of view. In the closing section, I wish to show how this critique of neoliberalism is suggestive of a politics that is more socially and ecologically sensitive.

### ***Communitarian critique of neoliberalism***

Communitarians, then, are also critical of a neoliberal capitalism that they characterise as dominating western societies. Communitarians often refer to an Aristotelian view of the

economy, not as a distinct sphere governed by its own rules (such as price mechanisms), but rather as being embedded in the social and moral life of a community and governed by ends found in these communities (see Katz 1997:277). On the Aristotelian understanding, the purpose of the economy for a household is to provide goods for use. Wealth accumulation in the market constitutes a folly that subordinates need to profit and acquisition and creates a world where leisure gives way to work. This critical way of thinking about the dominance of capitalism, as a system concerned with accumulation, and one that has come to dominate the social life of citizens, is typical of communitarians (Katz 1997:278). This is not dissimilar to John Barry's use of the Aristotelian notion of *oikonomia*, the economy of the household, in which the economy is a function subordinate to meeting the needs of the community. This is opposed to *chrematistics* -- the manipulation of property wealth and currency to generate short-term returns (Barry 1999:166). For Barry, the term *oikonomia* better captures the way in which we should think of an economy, as re-embedded in society and serving socio-ecological ends, rather than profit, acquisition and continued economic growth (See Barry 1999:166, 2012 Chaps 5 & 6).

In *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* Michael Sandel (2012) argues that there are parameters to what neoliberal economies can properly determine. As a communitarian, Sandel argues that there are limits to where market mechanisms such as incentives should be applied because monetisation corrupts the meaning of certain goods. For example, paying children for good behaviour corrupts the meaning of good behaviour. That is, it is good, in significant part, because it is a self-chosen activity done to help others rather than a way of obtaining financial reward (Sandel 2012:60). Sandel argues that markets are, in part, responsible for de-moralising public life, in the sense that in dominating public life amoral markets, which don't ask whether, '...some ways of valuing goods are higher, or worthier, than others', promotes an emptying of politics of its moral and civic energy, and has '...contributed to the technocratic, managerial politics,' which he sees as characteristic of many contemporary

societies (Sandel 2012:14). The logic of contemporary markets is to monetise value but, Sandel argues, we ought to question whether everything should be for sale. For example, many would baulk at the idea of monetising the value of a human being (Sandel 2012:10). However, market thinking continues to expand and dominate daily life.

Sandel argues that the role of markets should be rethought. Rather than being allowed to set the terms of human life, markets should be questioned: 'The great missing debate from contemporary politics is about the role and reach of markets' (Sandel 2012:11). As part of this argument, the communitarian notion of politics being about the nature of the good life and the ordering of goods in society comes in to play. In refraining from debating the good of the market and the nature of goods that are being left to be distributed purely by the market, liberal democracies have excluded from their agendas debate concerning the dominance of the market and the monetisation of all goods. Amoral markets and managerialism are, therefore, coming to determine our lives more and more, to the exclusion of communal life and public debate over the nature of society and the meaning of goods (Sandel 2012:202).

It is also clear that there is a link here, between Sandel's communitarian concern about the dominance of markets and managerialism, and the de-politicisation which Kenis and Lievens refer to above. For both sets of thinkers, substantive concerns about the values underlying liberal democracies have been side-lined in favour of apolitical, technocratic, solutions and a narrowing of the terms of political debate. They both argue for greater inclusion in democratic debate and decision making to re-enfranchise communities and reinvigorate democracy.

Alasdair MacIntyre is also critical of the dominance of free markets over communal life, and it is important to bear in mind his Marxist background, as he talks in terms of production, labour and capital explicitly. MacIntyre conceives of market relationships as, '...relationships governed by bargaining undertaken for mutual advantage'

(MacIntyre1999:115). He sees the dominance of market type relationships as undermining communal life and our proper regard for one another (MacIntyre 1999:117). In such a way, all human activity is reduced to economic activity and purely instrumental valuation of humans by each other (MacIntyre 1999:118). In *After Virtue* MacIntyre comments that his conception of the place of virtues in society is at odds with liberal societies', '... individualism, its acquisitiveness and its elevation of the values of the market to a central social place' (MacIntyre 1994:254). For MacIntyre, as an Aristotelian scholar, the vice of *pleonexia* (loosely translated as avarice or a desire to accumulate), has come to dominate the motivation for people to participate in production. Giving a historical account of the emergence of capitalism, he claims that as production moved beyond the household and community the economy was no longer embedded within community, and that production was, then, no longer aimed at sustaining communities (MacIntyre 1994:227). Rather, as it had moved beyond the household, work is determined by 'impersonal capital' to serve 'institutional acquisitiveness', as well as the reproduction of the work force and basic biological survival (MacIntyre 1994:227).

MacIntyre sees the managerialism of neoliberalism as a form of 'arbitrary barbarism' in which individuals are instrumentalised. As such, he sees the neoliberal era as a dark age. For MacIntyre what is required is the cultivation of local forms of community in which intellectual and moral life can be conducted (MacIntyre 1994:263). Though his comments are suggestive he does not move beyond this short statement about localised communities and their practices when describing a post-liberal/capitalist society. I shall return to examine MacIntyre's 'missing politics' in chapter 7 to argue that his politics of acknowledged dependence is well geared to challenging the dominance of neoliberalism regarding our human nature relationships at the collective level. Important for my purposes is to suggest what this missing politics might be from an eco-communitarian point of view.

## ***Conclusion***

I have argued that both communitarian and ecological theorists affirm a politics of the common good in some form. Both have been critical of the liberal conception of the radically individualised self as a premise of deontological liberalism. Both are also critical of the aspiration of contemporary liberal political thought to neutrality with respect to the good life. They argue that this has excluded the common good from the agenda of liberal democracies. In making these two criticisms both greens and communitarians have pointed out that contemporary liberal thought performs the normative work of valorising individuals who focus on their self-interest and private lives before considering the good and the needs of the democratic community as a whole. From a green point of view, this is particularly problematic as this self-interest tends to ignore the interests of others who form the individual's environment.

Green social liberals such as diZerega and Stephens argue that liberal political thought can accommodate a relational conception of the self and communal accounts of the good. However, communitarians, especially MacIntyre, go beyond a critique of political thought and are also concerned with critiquing the socio-economic reality of contemporary liberalism, or neoliberalism, as it actually exists, and posing an alternative politics and economics. Specifically, Alasdair MacIntyre's conception of a politics that acknowledges the dependence of individuals upon one another, in order to sustain democratic society, contains within it a potential bridge between communitarian politics and ecological political thought. A connection that may strengthen both positions and provide a more concrete basis for the political and social systems that would recognise their normative positions.

I have argued in this chapter that, by bringing the communitarian notion of the self into play, we are able to question just what individuals require to participate in a democratic political community. This may also allow us to talk about what that community, and the individuals within it, owe to each other to sustain a healthy democracy and acknowledge our

wider environmental interests. A communitarian position, and particularly that of MacIntyre, represents not just a fundamental challenge to neoliberalism but also suggestions for an alternative political economy in which individual's interdependencies are taken seriously. Communitarian positions that challenge neoliberalism not only align with ecological concerns about its dominance but, in the case of MacIntyre, are suggestive of a politics that embrace ecological concerns about our relationships to nature, and that seeks to retake control of the economy for socio-ecological ends. It is this potential that I shall develop in the following chapters.



## Chapter 3

### Eckersley's Place based Eco-Communitarianism

#### *Introduction*

The next two chapters outline a synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's communitarianism. In this chapter, I argue that Robyn Eckersley's work takes us in the direction of such a synthesis from a green perspective. However, I will also argue that we need to go further than the personal psychological reasons to care for an environment to developing, instead, an explicitly political conception which institutionalises this care. I argue that whilst caring individually about the non-human world is an important constituent of establishing sustainable human/nature relationships a political and collective conception of this caring for nature, embedded into our institutions, is also required. For this reason, I turn to the thought of Alasdair MacIntyre in the following chapters to suggest an alternative synthesis.

In this chapter, I will show that Eckersley advances an argument, derived from communitarian insights, in which particular psychological attachments to place are likely to generate social bonds of empathy between individuals within different environments. As we shall see with MacIntyre's argument, Eckersley's does not make reference to the considerability of non-human entities within their environments (though as a theorist who has done much work on eco-centrism she is more than aware of this green point of view), rather, she takes a more anthropocentric position where individual humans place value on their proximate environments.

I argue that a strong point of this approach is that it advocates an enlightened form of anthropocentrism in which individuals as valuers acknowledge the value or values in nature, beyond those of nature as a resource for consumption. This could provide the basis for a political conception in which our actions are framed in terms of whether they demonstrate sufficient respect for the plural values of nature or, to frame it negatively, whether they are

environmentally chauvinistic and dismissive of these plural values. As such, a strength of turning to communitarian argument, which considers the self as interrelated with others, is that it encourages us to look for political, as well as ontological and personal, alternatives to our current political, economic, and social practices.

I shall contend, however, that Eckersley's argument does not develop beyond an explanation of the personal reasons to care for an environment into an argument for a political defence of the environment. My argument, in contrast, is that this position must be developed into a more complete political theory which is not vulnerable to contingencies and subjectivities based on competing individual views of the environment. By this I mean, we ought to move towards a position that makes the status of the environment a matter of collective concern not just of private preference. This is because our relationship to our environment is part of the collective character of our society. More light will be shed on my proposed conception by drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre's work later in the following chapters, and it is important to note here that Eckersley does not make explicit reference to his argument. I will argue in the following chapter that greens should look to MacIntyre's arguments specifically because they examine and suggest the implications of drawing on an embedded ontology for politics.

The purpose of these next two chapters, then, is to develop a synthesis that enables the flourishing of individuals and their constitutive communities through strongly sustainable relationships to their proximate environments by seeing these environments as part of a wider community on which all are mutually dependent. In this instance, using an ontological approach, in which a relational ontology can inform political argument, reveals environments as part of a wider community of constitutive, psychological, and material, considerability to the self and its communities.

In following Eckersley and MacIntyre by adopting an ontological approach here, I hope to generate a theory in which the flourishing of individuals also takes into account, and establishes a respect for, the flourishing of the dynamic environments in which those

individuals are embedded. This encompasses the central concern that for individuals to flourish within their democratic communities, the environments, the entities on which they depend, must also be able to flourish appropriately, and this ought to be a major consideration of political practice and theory. I envision this to be of primary import in any political theory, and especially those regarding the design of political institutions (the issue to which the next chapter is devoted). To background our environments purely as a resource base to continually, and un-critically, draw down from is to misappropriate value. It also creates material and moral dilemmas that could be avoided through a more appropriate relationship with the natural world being seriously taken into account in political decision-making.

### ***Robyn Eckersley's eco-communitarianism***

Robyn Eckersley's chapter 'Communitarianism' (Eckersley 2006) was written as part of a reader that examines how different political theories, such as liberalism and feminism, have responded to the 'ecological challenge'. The collection of essays offers an examination of, for example, how liberalism and socialism deal with normative problems outlined by green political theory such as intergenerational justice or anti-speciesism (Dobson and Eckersley 2006: 1).

Eckersley frames her chapter with the question, 'Does communitarianism provide the appropriate insights, conceptual resources and norms to guide political communities along ecologically sustainable paths?' (Eckersley 2006:91). This is the same question that drives this thesis, and in many ways, the thesis is indebted to insights within this essay, as it acts as an inroad into examining the same question in depth. In fact, my thesis mirrors Eckersley's concern when she says that, '...it is possible to work with the *structure* of communitarian arguments to develop insights that might ground ecological selves, and ecologically sustainable societies' (Eckersley 2006: 95 emphasis in original).

Eckersley's argument arrives at a place-based sense of selfhood rather than the detached individualism of liberal cosmopolitans (and even globetrotting environmental activists). This place-based selfhood provides grounds for empathising personally with the environmental plight of others, both near and far. One thing to note at the outset is that the affinity is personal in that it is one person's relation to their environment rather than the broader environment itself that is being cared for. I will argue that we also need to establish how this care is to be conveyed at the broader political level of collective decision making. It is in this direction that I would venture to move an ecologism, informed by the ontological constructions of communitarianism. I shall say more on this later in arguing that MacIntyre's account gives some guidance on how to account for a duty of care towards the environment at a collective level.

Eckersley asserts that a key conceptual resource from within communitarian thought, which ecologism could use, is the notion that local, particular attachments to people and place create and constrain the possibilities of selfhood for the individual. Eckersley draws on an ontological argument, expanding on, and arguing for, what constitutes a human as a political agent in reference to its constitutive attachments. Eckersley's argument appears to be built around personal, psychological, attachments between people and place and, bonds of empathy which may exist between people and distant others. By psychological I mean that Eckersley's work, here, offers the personal psychological reasons why selves would care for their environments but not the way in which this would translate into collective political concern for environments.

I would argue that what is also required is an argument to bring this individual concern to bear on collective politics in order to establish concern for the environment at the political level. Arguably, a communitarian approach can provide this link between the individual concern and the collective practice. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate that these resources can be found by looking specifically at the arguments of Alasdair MacIntyre whom Eckersley does not reference in her overview of communitarianism. MacIntyre bases his

arguments firmly in an ontological conception of the self but extends them to consider the implications of his particular embedded ontology on collective practices and politics.

Eckersley's argument is that an individual's attachment to place, to their environment, creates and explains the motivational bonds to care for the environments of others which many people exhibit to some degree. We saw earlier that these are the social bonds which communitarians such as Sandel say are prior to political institutions of justice. These are the mutual ties that create political communities from a communitarian point of view and ought to be taken into account in political decision-making. Eckersley sees the strong local community attachments and particularisms of communitarianism as more defensible than a detached liberal cosmopolitan environmentalism (Eckersley 2006: 101).

Eckersley finds that the social attachments to particular communities and places found in communitarian ontological arguments provide the conceptual resources to generate care for local and global environments by enabling the individual to empathise with the predicaments of more distant others. By admitting the importance of local, particular attachments, not just to one's human community, but also to one's proximate environmental context, Eckersley is putting forward a model in which the local environment is an important part of an individual's identity. This builds on the notion that the human communities to which an individual belongs, in a communitarian understanding, feature in shaping the self. Working up from this particular ecologically-grounded self, Eckersley implies that if one cares about one's proximate environment, then one is likely to care for environments in general as one realises and appreciates that these are part of the identity of other individuals and their communities.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it creates and explains the capacity for empathy in individuals

---

<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that in this work Eckersley's evidence for this phenomenon is not readily apparent. It could be argued that selves would like to preserve their own environment *in spite* of any potential cost to the environments of others. In fact, she may find that that the argument falls victim to particularism to the extent that we are not able to empathise with others in different environmental contexts. In spite of this objection, I hope to make a different kind of argument for why we might be concerned for our environments in particular and in general. In saying this I am aware that Eckersley is using communitarianism to address cosmopolitan theories which appear not to address motivational concerns

for others and their environments. This insight itself will provide a key inroad to my proposed formulation later, wherein the environment with which the self engages is an integral part of its ability to flourish, but only insofar as that environment itself is also able to flourish.

Eckersley's chief concern is to demonstrate the idea that place-based identification with particular lived-in environments serves as a motivation to act in defence of nature writ large. For her, the communitarian attention to what motivates and constitutes the individual prior to establishing political norms and institutions should be instructive for ecological political theory, because, 'Understanding human *motivation* in terms of bounded and particular loyalties is arguably communitarianism's trump card' (Eckersley 2006:96 emphasis in original). Eckersley is critical of cosmopolitan forms of environmentalism because they lack the grounding in place which ought to generate concern for environments.

Cosmopolitanism refers to the idea that all humans belong to a global community by virtue of their sharing human attributes of moral concern. The sharing of these characteristics entails certain universal ethical obligations, such as a duty not to harm. Cosmopolitanism relies on the notion that all humans recognise and feel bound by these duties, in the Kantian deontological sense, no matter how distant the individuals are. From a communitarian perspective, cosmopolitanism in this form is weak because communitarians believe that individuals feel obligations more to those with whom they are more regularly engaged than to more distant abstract others. We are motivated, not by an abstract duty, but rather by actually felt connections to others. As such, a communitarian approach first of all accounts for a description of the self and how it relates to others, in that an individual learns care and compassion through face to face interactions which then act as a basis of wider compassion for more distant others.

Cosmopolitanism is the notion that people have a duty to care about distant others based upon a common humanity, such that other human beings be treated as ends in

---

at all. So, the idea of empathy between distant people for one another's environments may be a necessary condition for motivation, but it is perhaps not sufficient in and of its self.

themselves. That is, what one human does in one area can cause harm in another, and in doing so we realise that we can, and do, harm distant others through our actions. On a cosmopolitan understanding, our shared humanity entails a shared, global, morality. Eckersley refers to Andrew Linklater's work in the same collection (See Linklater 2006) that 'we are most likely to develop cosmopolitan emotions when we realise our actions are causally responsible for harming others and their physical environments' (Eckersley 2006:102). Eckersley's response is to say that it is not whether we cause harm which makes us care about environmental harms to others. One does not necessarily follow from the other. Rather, it is more plausible to suggest that we need to feel a sense of 'belonging' or 'affinity' (Eckersley 2006:103) to the community concerned first, in order to establish our care for that community. Such affinity is learnt at the local face to face level.

Eckersley's argument appears to suggest that we cannot just assume such a shared global morality exists. We must first look to our own experiences and attachments and it is these particular attachments, learnt at the local level, rather than the duties of cosmopolitanism, which motivate us to care for any environment. In effect, she is concerned that cosmopolitan forms of environmentalism are too abstracted from actual and felt experiences of the environment to affect a real and genuine concern that can be expressed in the collective sphere of politics.

Eckersley observes that from a communitarian point of view the self qua individual exists and is constituted within and through 'bounded' and particular communities: 'From a communitarian perspective, human identity is always *bounded* in space and time. This boundedness shapes and constrains the field of ethical and political possibilities; our ethics are correlative with the various particularistic, bounded communities to which we belong.' (Eckersley 2006: 93, emphasis in original). This means that it is necessary to understand and build from the context of the local and the particular, before launching into developing universal norms, such as the right to an adequate environment, to solve global environmental problems. When thinking about how to promote reasons to care for the environment we can

look to the 'bounded and particular loyalties' that communitarians use in their constructions of the self (Eckersley 2006: 96) as the foundation for more universalist norms regarding care for the environment. In a sense, this is a formalised ontological version of the mantra 'act locally think globally'. By invoking care for one's own immediate environment, using this communitarian formulation, one is also establishing the preconditions for caring about any environment and empathising with other individuals and communities whose environments suffer, or may be vulnerable to, degradation and exploitation (see also Carter, 2007:196; Freudenberg and Steinsapir, 1991, in support of this argument).

It is well worth noting at this point that Eckersley is still talking in strictly anthropocentric terms. She refers to the importance of the environment for an individual's identity and well-being, and the environment, in this case, is valued for its constitutive role in shaping and enabling the individual human self. It may be possible to expand the formulation so that the concept of the environment is less contingent on its value to the individual, say for its aesthetic value, and that would be to say that this environment itself must be of a particular quality for it to enable other selves within it to develop fully. To go further, the self is situated so as to have responsibilities towards its environment in virtue of the fact that it receives goods from its environment. Thus, a reciprocal arrangement exists between the self and its environment that is necessary to ensure the flourishing of both. The concept of continued flourishing would be one attributed by humans to nature, but this is less anthropocentric than simply ignoring the state of the environment beyond its value in immediate consumption. In chapter 4 I shall look at how the concept of the environment can be moved to a less contingent position, based upon personal preferences, to one in which the status of the environment is a question of primary, collective, political importance.

Referring to communitarian ontological explanations of the self in the world, Eckersley notes that the communitarian self is fundamentally relational and, in part, socially constructed and interpreted through shared understandings. Community is the resource that enables human political agency and freedoms and is the matrix in which selves are embedded and



sustained. From Eckersley's point of view the communities to which we belong can themselves be plural and overlap, and she also believes that communitarians should be constructivists whose communities and understandings are malleable and open to critique by those who construct them. In such a way, as with many of those labelled communitarian, Eckersley is committed to a form of communitarianism that admits toleration and pluralism.

The focus of Eckersley's article on the particularism of communitarianism establishes a position in which differing communities are admitted and tolerated. The idea is conservative in that tradition and localism are included and given importance, but constructive and progressive in that these features ought to be drivers of reflection, criticism, and progress within and between communities, traditions, and localities. However, I would argue that it is somewhat naïve to assume that this process of reflection will lead to environmentally more benign outcomes at a collective level, without the framing of deliberation in light of prior understanding that the environment is something on which all are mutually dependent. I will argue later that the inclusion of the virtues of acknowledged dependence into particular forms of local political deliberation, taken from MacIntyre's communitarian construction, moves us in the direction of engendering care for the environment at the substantive decision-making level.

The important move that Eckersley makes, and the one I am developing in this thesis, is the shift from seeing the self embedded in, and enabled by, the human community, to seeing the self embedded in the environment, including the integrity of the ecosystem as a 'structural precondition of human integrity' (Eckersley 2006:96). Non-human species are part of the communities through which we are realised, and this is an important leap for ethics and politics to make; one which a communitarian formulation may be seen to promote when injected with some green thinking.

Eckersley starts at the local 'place-based' level, '...in which the social and ecological learning that is required for communities to reorient their practices on a more sustainable basis,' may take place (Eckersley 2006:97). In her description of the locally bounded

community, Eckersley sees the self and its 'deep psychological attachment' (Eckersley 2006:96) to its immediate environments as the root of a broader collective motivation to think of future generations and defend nature. In this local setting, the self and its environment are closely linked in that the self is likely not to tolerate environmental destruction readily in its own back yard.

Most significantly for my purposes, Eckersley states but does not develop the notion that, '...the ideal of self-determination is necessarily a collective one, based on the idea of mutual enablement' (Eckersley 2006: 95). This statement prompts two important comments. First, one's autonomy is enabled through communal endeavour, and second, the autonomy and self-determination of others, including non-human entities within the environment, may be thought of as similarly constituted; it is in what sense this is the case that will be subject of the next chapter. In such a way, Eckersley's position appears to be one of enlightened anthropocentrism. A position in which the theorist still takes the human self and its self-determination as its focus and source of value, but which also takes into consideration the value of the environment as something that is inhabited by human selves and identified with as something which selves may care for. This is what I consider to be one of the key strengths of drawing on a communitarian argument and a key insight which Eckersley develops.

Here I would invoke Brian Baxter's account of enlightened anthropocentrism that, '...the fact of our interdependence with the rest of nature is of importance to ecologism because it suggests how environmental destruction adversely affects human and non-human well-being and thus marks out the area of our moral responsibility' (Baxter 1999:7). In this instance, as Eckersley has noted in her own place-based argument, ontological constructions are important to political argument when it comes to reconsidering our relationship to our environments in providing grounds to establish reasons to argue for respect for nature.

Such an enlightened anthropocentrism entails that human action is not rendered entirely problematic by this moral concern for nature as, '...part of what is meant by attributing moral considerability to the non-human is that we ought to conduct ourselves in certain

respects towards the latter...' (Baxter 1999:7). Thus, humans remain capable of acting upon nature but there is a demand upon us to account for and justify our impact upon our environment in acknowledgement of our interdependencies with it. What I will also advocate, in the following chapter, is the framing of our interactions with our environment, using MacIntyre's virtue approach, in a way in which *humans* acknowledge their dependence and the needs of others who depend on nature, including nature its self. Before I do so I would like to consider Eckersley's example of the ecological self and to consider some partial objections to her approach.

### ***Eckersley's example of the ecological self***

After exploring how an ecological self may be thought to be bounded, Eckersley gives the reader an insight into the type of self she is thinking of. Eckersley settles on exploring a description of the self found within a particular, local community to explain how motivations to care for the local and wider environment can be encouraged. She looks at a type of self somewhere between the 'ideal bioregional citizen and the eco-nationalist xenophobe' (Eckersley2006:100), rather than taking an ideal type. The example she chooses is the character of Ratty from Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows*.

It is Ratty's deep attachment to his place of living which a communitarian approach can use to explain and help account for people's wanting to act in defence of their environments. Ratty loves his riverbank in the wild wood and Eckersley contends that this gives him a capacity to empathise with the environmental plight of others (206:101). Eckersley argues that rather than take the cosmopolitan approach of establishing universal environmental norms to deal with trans-boundary environmental problems, this communitarian account of the self with its particular, constitutive attachment, provides the grounds for empathy with other environments in which people dwell. I agree with her here that, as opposed to the universal duties of Kantian cosmopolitanism, a better foundation for

establishing norms for protecting the environment extends from the way in which people experience their environment. In such a way, commitment to norms is derived from people's experiences, they consent to norms agreed within their communities, rather than arbitrarily imposed universal norms.

Eckersley claims that it is empathy for others, and the places in which they dwell, that explains the motivation to defend or be concerned for them. This empathy is best developed through face-to-face interaction between the self and the local environment it experiences. This is in effect where the self is socialised and comes to embody the passionate attachment to place it learns from the start of life: 'Without some knowledge and attachment to our *own* riverbank - to this riverbank, not any old riverbank - I find it hard to understand how one might be motivated to defend *other* riverbanks' (Eckersley 2006:104 emphasis in original).

*Personal* identification with the local or particular, here shown through Ratty's affection for the river bank, is what generates wider empathies with ecosystems and other entities in general. Elaborating on the point of identification as a motivation to care for or respect environments, Eckersley states that *belonging* provides the basis of, and an explanation for, political motivation with respect to environmental concerns. It is the dwelling within a particular environment and the meanings, memories and affectations that are developed by the self, which create the basis for empathy. In this way, the sphere of culture and personal identity, in which people identify with their environments and have sympathies with other entities and their unfolding, precedes larger, normative political institution building. She writes:

This extension must be both affective and cognitive, since the core of the communitarian case is that extending our sense of *belonging* provides a far more potent basis for political motivation to protect non-human species and victims of environmental injustice than the idea of *affectedness*. The success of ecological citizenship based on the idea of the ecological footprint (Dobson) or

cosmopolitan democracy (Held) presuppose, for their success, a sufficient affinity or social bond between perpetrators and victims for the former to take responsibility for affected others in distant lands (Eckersley 2006:105 emphasis in original).

Eckersley is then advocating a particular type of place-based identification. I agree with her that the communitarian insight that the self is psychologically attached to its particular communities and places provides a strong foundation for explaining and formulating an effective eco-centric political theory. I agree that using a communitarian formula for ecologism has much merit. It brings to the table a well-tested political theory that is familiar to many in mainstream political theory. It offers an insight into why a focus on the self at the root of political theory is vitally important when it comes to prescribing policy choices and valuing particular lifestyles and ways of being. However, a key point to make is that it is possible and important that we go further than place-based reasons to care for the environment. We would want to do this because, though I agree with the importance of place-based psychological identification as a source of social learning about the environment, the argument is vulnerable to contingencies and counter examples.

### ***Some concerns with Eckersley's approach***

The concern could be put like this: 'is a personal closeness to nature alone a guarantee of respect for the environment and future generations?' or put another way: 'does closeness to nature automatically pacify our collective relationships with it?' I think that it is possible that closeness to the environment, though a necessary condition, is not sufficient to guarantee respect. This is because many professions work in close contact with nature and natural resources in ways which many greens would consider to be destructive. Loggers in Brazil are born and raised in close proximity to the environment but do not shirk their task of harvesting

trees because their families depend on them. Likewise, oil rig workers, who increasingly bear the brunt of more hazardous working conditions as more and more unobtainable sinks of oil are sought at increasing risk to themselves, still support the practice as their individual livelihoods depend upon this particular practice. Closeness to nature may bring much understanding of our precarious and contingent relationship to it on a personal level, but it does not necessarily translate into pro-environmental collective political decision-making because these concerns are relegated to the personal level of the individual rather than a matter of major collective importance.<sup>2</sup> I would argue that we need a strategy through which these concerns can be given a more substantive status so that they are not traded off as mere personal preferences for a safe or a beautiful environment. At this point, we need to take a deeper look at communitarian thought than that provided here by Eckersley. We need to find resources for our argument for an ecologism that gives concerns about the environment substantive political status, such that they are seriously considered at the collective political level when legislation is formed governing our relation to the environment.

Furthermore, Eckersley chooses the character of Ratty because he dwells in an environment; the environment he dwells in is a riverbank. This environment suits Eckersley's argument rather well, as it evokes a context of a rural idyll. However, the experience of many selves in modern urbanised democracies, and even in rural contexts, is not always like this. Some people enjoy living in minimalist apartments surrounded by glass and steel, others experience landscaped gardens with shale and gravel as preferable to cottage gardens with wildflowers. These are all private ways of life that are currently equally valued – and

---

<sup>2</sup>This concern is borne out in part by research Witherspoon: '...romanticism about nature correlates only modestly with support for green policies' (Witherspoon 1994:122 in Rootes 1997:321), and '...green political activism...is much more likely to be found among people who have a coherent ideology linking social and environmental problems and solutions' (ibid.: 128). Support for green policies even at some personal cost 'depends not only upon knowledge but upon social values...Those who place a high value on the welfare of others and on a collective approach to solving social problems are more likely to be willing to support environmental policies than those who do not' (ibid.:135) (Rootes 1997: 321 quoting Witherspoon (1994:122). Drawing on research by Witherspoon, Rootes is also concerned that it is not simply sentimentalism about nature that is required to motivate a general collective advocacy of ecologically sensitive policy.

particularly on a liberal understanding.<sup>3</sup> These environments all play a part in socialising individuals and their communities and create differences of opinion when it comes to empathising with the predicaments of others in their environments. Sure enough, we can, and do, take individuals out of these contexts and expose them to environments where flora and fauna which are considered as commodities for consumption in an urban context live out their lives. For example, many education programmes involve taking young pupils into the 'outdoor environment' in order to demonstrate the merits of being 'in touch' with nature.

However, the appreciation may turn out to be a surface level one based upon appearances in which nature or the environment is cherished largely for its idyllic appearance. This may lead to somewhat blinkered aspirations for all environments to appear untouched or unspoilt like the countryside of middle England in the *Wind in the Willows*. From this point of view, pretensions to protecting environments for their appearance and particular meanings to people as halcyon rural idylls may sometimes neglect the fact that these environments are shaped by people. It also neglects the fact that the nature which is within these environments exists in ways which may appear far less appealing to some. Furthermore, Ratty himself may not be a fan of wind farms towering up between the willow trees that other environmentally conscious groups may see as necessary to overcome dependence on fossil fuels and take seriously the needs of future generations and other species affected by the detrimental aspects of climate change. This is not at all to dismiss the aesthetic valuation per se. Indeed, an aesthetic engagement with the environment would be an acknowledgement of something more than nature's value in consumption and this field itself is moving towards recognising

---

<sup>3</sup> Beyond liberal democracies of the west a huge percentage of people also live in harsh and unfavourable environments where they are vulnerable and unsafe, where it might be difficult to develop a sense of care and empathy. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with an international politics and certainly a communitarian approach would probably advocate local solutions to these environmental problems. What can be said is that in empathising with our own environments it would be plausible to suggest we would not want to degrade the environments of others further. Individuals who acknowledge their dependence on their environment might actually want to help other communities address these environmental issues in a sustainable manner which respects the environment and those particular communities within it. This thesis is not a call for preserving nature untouched, rather it is a call to respect the environment, and the environment of others, such that both individuals and the environment may continue to flourish.

that the appreciation of nature is an active process which includes physical interaction with the environment (see Berleant 2012 for example). Indeed, aesthetic appreciation would still be part of what I propose as a synthesis of ecologism and MacIntyre's communitarianism.

What underlies Eckersley's notion of community is identification with a particular place. This type of relationship provides an effective locus for generating strict reasons to care for the environment because these connections to place are often felt very strongly. Arguments against pylons and wind farms are often built upon place-based attachments and the importance of these places to the communities within them, a sort of 'local conservatism', if you will. Part of the issue here, which will need to be addressed, is that this type of identification may prove to be something of a double-edged sword for greens when conflicts over place occur at varying levels: from local rural conservatism to the national or even global need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup>

As such, a key for this thesis is that whilst providing valuable insights into what communitarianism can offer ecologism, Eckersley's approach could be described as pre-political and socio-psychological. This is in the sense that she focuses on the personal identification of individuals with their particular environments. In other words, Eckersley's argument at this point does not fully address the communitarian concern that the self's connection to others or the environment is a matter for public reflection and deliberation, rather than a private concern. I would argue that what is also required is an argument to bring this individual environmental concern to bear on collective politics.

---

<sup>4</sup>Eckersley chooses to favour local place-based psychological identification as a means to achieving a check on more globalising forces. It may be that issues of NIMBYism prove problematic for Eckersley. If there is no necessary connection between one's sense of place and empathy for more distant others, then it may be that the self would favour distributing environmental harms further afield to save its own back yard, as often happens. Furthermore, if it is aesthetics alone which the self is concerned with, then one might prefer distant centralised nuclear power generation to sustainable use of wider areas of land closer to home. I would favour an approach that attempts reconciliation between each level of Eckersley's conceptions to achieve its outcome. This will be considered later in the next chapter when looking at Alasdair MacIntyre's communitarianism in building an ontological argument which takes green concerns into account.



## **Conclusion**

I will side-step these arguments about subjectivity somewhat, whilst appreciating that the contested nature of the environment is to a large degree what makes it political, by trying to get to the root of what it is that is important about our constitutive relationships to other entities. A key question I wish to address is: is it possible to formalise our relationship to our environments to the degree that a norm which engenders a respectful and observant attitude may be promoted at the collective political level? By doing so I remove some of the criticisms to which a purely place-based, socialising/psychological approach may be vulnerable. At this point, I shall posit a complementary formula, itself derived from a communitarian argument. That is an ontological construction which is not intended to exclude, but to go beyond, place-based psychological identification, and which identifies a relationship we have with non-human entities which makes them worthy of political and moral consideration. Eckersley's essay covers communitarianism in general but does not refer to Alasdair MacIntyre. I will show in the following chapters that in focusing on MacIntyre's arguments, which deal with ontology and politics, that it is possible to look to a communitarian argument for resources which contribute to a collective political conception that draws upon an embedded ontology.

In the next chapter, I aim to build upon and correct the flaws in Eckersley's analysis by drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre's work. I will argue that his approach offers ecologism a particular structure for conceptually embedding environmental concerns at the level of political deliberation and decision making. As a way of building on Eckersley's insights, I will look at a key text from within the communitarian camp - a series of lectures by Alasdair MacIntyre collected together in the book *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre 1999). I argue that this construction offers an outline for a political theory which utilises a communitarian framework to produce a political theory that takes seriously the concerns of ecologism charted in the preceding chapters.

## Chapter 4

### MacIntyre: Acknowledging Dependence

#### *Introduction*

I have argued that we need to move beyond the psychological attachments to place put forward by Eckersley and that there are resources within communitarianism which can help us do this. In this chapter, I argue that these resources can be found in the Aristotelian thought of Alasdair MacIntyre. In particular, his book *Dependent Rational Animals* provides conceptual resources for arguing that our fundamental dependencies should engender concern for our environments. MacIntyre's argument stems from an ontological position in which the self is seen as fundamentally vulnerable, a condition that humans share with other animals, and thus they are fundamentally dependent on others. For MacIntyre, this insight is both a corrective of Aristotle's ontology of the independent self and the self which exhibits distinctly masculine virtues of self-sufficiency (1999:7). For MacIntyre, where humans differ from other animals is that in order to flourish they need to be able to come together to debate how best to organize themselves and to contest the meaning of flourishing at any particular time. As such, MacIntyre proposes particular, localised, deliberative, political structures as a means of enabling us in acknowledging our dependencies and in deliberating about the ordering of goods in our communities. If we include non-human entities and the environment in our interdependence, greens can then learn much from MacIntyre's arguments: both from his ontological construction of the self as dependent, and from his proposition for the structures which facilitate the acknowledgement of this dependence.

#### *Introducing MacIntyre's argument*

The work of Alasdair MacIntyre draws upon relational ontological arguments, that see selves as interdependent, in order to counter deontological liberal arguments. As we have seen,

communitarians such as MacIntyre characterise these liberal arguments as being based upon rights that advocate radical individualism to the detriment of constitutive communities and their resources. The target of MacIntyre's criticism is the individualism of contemporary liberal and libertarian thought and practice. This is because of the way in which power is deployed by the state, whereby elites and corporations manipulate and manage citizens, qua liberal individuals, to achieve their own ends, rather than the ends of the individual citizens. For MacIntyre neoliberal individualism is something to be wary of because 'individualism is and always was the doctrine of successful thieves from the community' (MacIntyre 1976 178-9).

MacIntyre's work is crucial to greens in part because it directly connects with, and is sympathetic to, ecological concerns over the ontological moral status of mammals such as dolphins. This amounts to a *prima facie* case for using MacIntyre's work as the basis for an eco-communitarian synthesis. For my purposes, what is of even greater value in the work is the ontological argument put forward by MacIntyre about what the most appropriate system for modern democracies to better acknowledge our interdependence is. I will pursue this topic further in chapters 6 and 7. MacIntyre's aim is to produce a theory, from a Thomistic Aristotelian perspective, that accounts for the need for the virtues in modern society. That is a political theory in which certain dispositions of character, virtues, are shown to promote the flourishing of people and their communities. Such a requirement for an account of the virtues in politics is generated by the fact of human dependence on others throughout life, and the resulting need to ensure that the requirements of the individual are met in such a way that the community and the individual are enabled to flourish. Where MacIntyre (1999) falls short from a green point of view is that, despite references to non-human animals, this is still a work whose target is bounded by human communities and human needs alone. MacIntyre is not a green political theorist he is therefore vulnerable to a green charge of being radically anthropocentric in his approach. However, MacIntyre's point of view can be reconciled with a form of enlightened anthropocentrism, in the sense that the self is aware of its dependence on

the environment and vice-versa. The self can then be thought of as embedded in its communal and ecological relationships.

To briefly recount MacIntyre's critical position: modern liberal democratic states and their institutions are conceived as neutral by their own ideology, i.e. neoliberalism. This means that they claim to prioritise no particular vision of the good life so that citizens may be able to pursue their own ends (see Murphy 154: 2003). The state, under this conception, expects allegiance because it provides the institutions and goods that enable citizens to pursue their own ends without demanding them to live in any particular way. In other words, the neoliberal state enables competing conceptions of the good to coexist and, by its own account, should distribute resources without being influenced by any particular substantive notion of the good. For MacIntyre, this account of the state and its relationship to its citizens is incomplete because it gives no account of the goods of particular communities within the state, how these goods are to be considered, and how the politics of these communities should function.

MacIntyre contends that the state is not a neutral institution with regards to the interests of its citizens, rather it is, '...united in an indissoluble partnership with the national and international market ... it is never merely a neutral arbiter of conflicts, but... acts in the interests of particular and highly contestable conceptions of liberty and property' (MacIntyre 2006: 209-11 see also Knight 2007: 169-71). On this account, liberal ideology serves to bar deeper questioning by citizens into the nature of the state, hiding its instrumentalisation of citizens in the service of neoliberal economic forces about which they have little say.

Kelvin Knight portrays MacIntyre's view of politics and neoliberal ideology as one in which the state claims to resist policy substantiated from first principles or final ends. At the same time, its citizens have to accept the view that the good life is a private and subjective matter that ought not to influence the state's bureaucratic functions (Knight 2007: 174-76). In this picture, it is the state that 'does politics' whilst citizens are alienated from real decision-making about their collective life. Collective life is important for MacIntyre because it shapes private personal life; the division between the two, on a neoliberal understanding, is too rigid,

in reality, he argues, the boundary between the personal and the public is far more blurred than neoliberal theory allows.

MacIntyre is a communitarian in a particular way, and he has in the past distanced himself from the label 'communitarian' since for him other 'contemporary communitarian' thinkers do not share in the same critical perspective on the state (MacIntyre 1994:302). He contends that communitarians are right to argue that politics is about the good life for people. However, he argues, that it is wrong to think that such a large and heterogenous community as the nation state should have the state express and enact 'some shared vision of the human good' as if it were a single community (MacIntyre 1994:302). Rather, MacIntyre argues that shared ideas about the good stem from much more local and particular communities of practice.

On this account, MacIntyre's view of deliberation and decision-making about the goods of a community is that they should be far more localised than the level of the nation state.<sup>1</sup> The nation state, in MacIntyre's view, is an imagined community that should, and can, only function properly as an arbiter between the different views of the many communities contained within it. However, for MacIntyre, this form of political institution is too far removed from areas of political praxis or communities. Political theory ought not to ignore the politics of local and particular communities as this is the sphere in which the individual is sustained and is the site at which collective notions of the good are established and can be meaningfully furthered. MacIntyre is concerned about the erosion of relationships within communities that sustain the individual and its political empowerment in terms of being able to shape the good life for itself and its community. So, for MacIntyre, liberals are right to defend the nation state from being given over to particular, substantive, views of the good but wrong to argue that collective notions of the good should not at all feature in political decision-making. This is particularly the case when ideas of the good are constitutive of communities upon which the

---

<sup>1</sup> I shall return to this crucial point of differentiation of MacIntyre from other communitarians in the final chapter when we look at his particular politics of acknowledged dependence.

individual is dependent. I shall return to this point later. First, I will take a close look at the work in which MacIntyre explains his thinking on his type of communitarian politics, and how it can take ecological political thought beyond place-based reasons to care for nature.

### ***Dependent Rational Animals***

MacIntyre's thesis in *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (1999) is developed from the ontological premise that, contra much work in contemporary moral and ethical thinking, humans are animals. To him, this means that our identities are shaped, in part, by our needs in a similar way to that of other animals such as the great apes and dolphins. He argues that we, like they, are dependent on others in coming to know how to take care of ourselves and others. As such, we need to learn to nourish our bodily selves to survive and to flourish as humans (MacIntyre 1999:8). MacIntyre then argues that, unlike animals, we are not entirely biologically determined in that we learn as humans to reflect on our needs and goals in coming to reason as individuals.

According to MacIntyre, it follows from the ontological premise that we need to adequately appreciate the fact that because we are animals, we, like they, are dependent on others in coming to and exercising our independent reason and autonomy. We need others to raise, educate, look after us in old age and in periods of physical and emotional distress. In order to exhibit independent rational agency and individualism, cherished in modern western societies, we must also develop virtues of acknowledged dependence between individuals (MacIntyre 1999:1-8). MacIntyre builds upon this construction an account of the types of social relationship and conception of the common good required to sustain and transmit the virtues of rational independence and acknowledged dependence (MacIntyre 1999:1-9). In this regard, he demonstrates a positive notion of autonomy in which independent reasoning is only possible once the individual has been supported by others through their adolescence and

infirmity to do so. Individuals then test their reasoning against, or with, each other in public deliberation about the ordering of goods in society.

MacIntyre's thesis then hinges on the ontological point that human individuals are constituted biologically as dependent rational animals. By rational MacIntyre means that humans, unlike other animals, can partly transcend their animal nature in coming together to reflect on their goals and goods. However, they can only do so in so far as they are physically and psychologically dependent on others to support them in developing their capacity to reason and reflect. This contrasts with Eckersley's socio-psychological observation that the self has a predisposition for empathy and concern for its local environment. MacIntyre is arguing for a particular metaphysical construction of the self, seeking characteristics that all human selves may be thought to share in common. For MacIntyre, all humans, at some crucial period, pass through conditions of being dependent on others. He then derives a normative theory from this starting point of material and psychological interdependence, as I shall show.

As an Aristotelian or communitarian, MacIntyre is referring to care for other humans, and Eckersley, as a green political theorist, is referring to care for the environment. The main difference between their approaches to explaining why individuals ought to care about others is that Eckersley's approach depends on the self's affection for its own surroundings, whilst MacIntyre's establishes that the self is both materially and psychologically dependent on the flourishing of others. Eckersley's approach is constructivist in the sense that she treats environments as localities which selves inhabit and interpret. We see this when she refers to 'identity' (Eckersley 2006:92) and 'belonging' (ibid:100) rather than being physically dependent or determined biologically by one's environment. MacIntyre's approach is also constructivist in the sense that he refers to individuals learning to stand back from their desires and reflect on what is good (MacIntyre 1999:84), and communities coming together to reflect upon the ordering of goods. However, there is also a sense in which he is essentialist. This is in referring to the idea that selves are dependent on each other in coming to be able to reason and reflect and at times when they are particularly vulnerable.

MacIntyre stresses the point of our vulnerable and dependent nature in his ontological construction because he feels that our animal condition is something which has been either largely ignored, or denied, by much Western ethical and political theory. In doing so, much political and ethical theory has disregarded the idea that it is necessary to foster, not just independence and freedoms from harm and coercion, but to foster and develop the relationships between individuals within communities which enable us to reason independently. This concern with the political nature of interrelationships between selves and communities, and with the self as something more than an individual consumer and independent preference former, is the ground that both ecological political theory and communitarianism share. MacIntyre writes with an anthropocentric concern for human individuals and their communities to the extent that the focus is upon interrelationships between humans and their communities. I will explore his thesis in *Dependent Rational Animals* as it stands, before returning to work up a synthesis between MacIntyre's thesis and ecologism and wider green political ideas about the role of the good in deliberation.

Up to this point in his work, MacIntyre had been focusing on the need for, and merits of, a virtue-based approach to ethics and normative social and political thought; a focus that was derived largely from an Aristotelian account of virtues. *Dependent Rational Animals* continues in the same vein, as a counter to Kantian (deontological), utilitarian and contractarian ethical thought, but acts as a corrective to his previous work - *After Virtue* (1994) in particular. MacIntyre states that in previously talking about the place of the virtues in society he had tried to avoid as much as possible being tied into using Aristotle's metaphysical accounts of the self; MacIntyre calls this Aristotle's 'Metaphysical Biology' (MacIntyre 1999:x). However, MacIntyre announces that he was mistaken, as he believes many others have been, in constructing an ethics without reference to ontology, in particular regarding biology and to the condition of humans as biological entities. This is because in having chosen to disregard metaphysics, and by not talking about ontology outright, he had been led to underestimate



the ‘...extent of human vulnerability and disability,’ and thus the need for an ethics that accounts for and facilitates human flourishing’ (MacIntyre 1999: xi).<sup>2</sup>

In acknowledging this need, MacIntyre can be seen as moving towards a green position. This is in the sense that our biology and our relationships with others are seen as important underpinnings of human agency and politics which need to be taken into account when thinking about political and ethical norms and institutions. To take a similar example from deep green theory, Freya Mathews comments that, ‘A true apprehension of nature reveals the depth of our physical groundedness in Nature, and therefore does entail a careful attitude toward our finite resources’ (Mathews 1994:141).

Further, MacIntyre is wary of political thought which claims that the self can be thought of as radically autonomous, as this position undermines the nurturing of social bonds that enable our autonomy in the first instance. As such, he does not accept an Aristotelian ontology outright as it too contains strong individualistic elements. He corrects Aristotle’s account of the self by drawing on Thomas Aquinas’ account of the virtues in which Aquinas repudiates Aristotle’s notion of ‘Megalopsychos’ (MacIntyre 1999:127), the notion that a virtuous person is one who emphasises their independence from others. Rather, Aquinas acknowledges that humans are, in their animal condition, vulnerable and dependent and that a virtuous person ought to show grace in receiving from others and endeavour to support others appropriately. MacIntyre develops his own argument concerning the place of virtues along this Thomistic Aristotelian line.

---

<sup>2</sup>MacIntyre himself does not explain what he means by flourishing, and he has acknowledged this fact in response to his critics (see MacIntyre 2009). However, we can infer that by ‘human flourishing’ (as discussed in *Dependent Rational Animals*) he means the development of humans’ independent practical reason so as to further the independent practical reasoning of others. Here MacIntyre translates flourishing, loosely, from the Latin expression *Bene Vivere* – to live well. The exercise of independent practical reason, that is reasoning about the ordering of goods required to flourish, is one essential component of flourishing for MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1999:105). As I argued earlier this individual and collective dialogue is designed to avoid justifying one particular way of living over another, but rather to say that it is possible from within a tradition or community to determine what is living well. The use of flourishing in this way allows for critical engagement with the idea of what it is to live well and is one of the ways in which MacIntyre attempts to avoid being radically conservative.

MacIntyre's approach in *Dependent Rational Animals* is to start by drawing upon 20<sup>th</sup> century work on animal behaviour to demonstrate how human and animal behaviour can be described in similar ways. There are animals such as the great apes and dolphins that exhibit behaviour and cognitive functions similar to those of humans.<sup>3</sup> MacIntyre takes issue in particular with the descriptions by philosophers such as Gadamer and Heidegger of the category of 'animal' as a category entirely distinct from 'human' when describing what it is to be human. He believes that these philosophers obscure the notion that the difference between human and animal is one of scale, in terms of intelligence and intentional activity within an environment, rather than of type. MacIntyre takes issue with the idea that animals are wholly shaped by their environment, unable to distance themselves from their immediate circumstances by reflection on their goals.<sup>4</sup> He cites evidence from research into dolphins and chimps to show how these animals can reflect individually and collectively to realise the best way of achieving a certain goal. He also notes that, like humans, they are capable of being mistaken in their beliefs (MacIntyre 1999:61).

After this initial response to theories setting humans and animals at a radical distance from each other, MacIntyre moves back to more familiar territory to discuss the idea of the good and flourishing. These are ideas that we have seen to be central to the approach labelled communitarian.

---

<sup>3</sup>These features have been used before and since from an ethical point of view to attribute rights and moral concern to certain non-human animals (see Singer 2002 for example). This rights-based method stands contrary to that of MacIntyre in that his approach is more communitarian, whilst the rights-based approach is rather more individualistic. MacIntyre attributes importance to the interrelationships within communities which enable the development of individual animals and the fulfilment of their individual and collective goals, whilst a rights-based approach is one which emphasises the individuality of the entity concerned and thus ignores the importance of the constitutive relationships and positive responsibilities between individuals which may be necessary to sustain their flourishing.

<sup>4</sup>This echoes some eco-feminist thought in which entities thought to be not worthy of significant moral concern are subsumed within the category of nature and not thought to be capable of political agency, in a similar way in which women had been categorised as being too constrained by their biological functions (See Plumwood 1993). MacIntyre himself acknowledges the work of feminists on the notion of dependency (MacIntyre 1999:3)

## ***Animals and goods***

MacIntyre's account of the human as a moral and political agent is a teleological one in that the self is fundamentally defined through its relationship to some particular set of end goals towards which it is orientated. This is consistent with his earlier accounts of human reasoning and is based on an Aristotelian account of the self. For MacIntyre, humans are goal-orientated animals, distinctive in their ability to reflect on their past, and future, and to distance themselves from their immediate desires. Contra Aristotle, however, MacIntyre is happy to describe humans as animal in that they share a fundamentally dependent nature. Humans are dependent on others in being raised to become independent practical reasoners, just as dolphins depend on others to come to be successful hunters. Put in this way, the human telos (end) consists in humans becoming independent practical reasoners, reasoners about action, capable of exercising their autonomy in looking after their own needs and the needs of others who are dependent upon them. However, this cannot be considered without also acknowledging that to move towards this end we are dependent upon others, at sometimes more than at others, in a similar fashion to behaviour observed in other animals.

MacIntyre's argument is that to become independent practical reasoners, in the sense that we can provide an account of our decision making through our adulthood, we are fundamentally dependent on other humans who are independent practical reasoners. He takes the modern liberal intuitive ideal of achieving practical independence and autonomy for the individual and uses this conception of the self to demonstrate how this goal actually makes the self very dependent on others at times, rather than being radically separate from the interests of others. And so, MacIntyre's use of the word 'independent' contrasts with the liberal use of the word in that for MacIntyre independence is relative rather than absolute. That is, it is relative to our dependent states in our adolescence and infirmity and also contingent upon relations to others who support us in our reasoning, and whose shared understandings are important to include in deliberation.

MacIntyre breaks down the distinction between humans and animals by arguing that there are 'goods' in both realms. He suggests that some animals pursue goods in a similar way to humans. This is in the sense that a good, for MacIntyre, appears to be something that one aims at, something when once achieved, completes the activity which one has undertaken to achieve it, and something that is thought to contribute in part to one's wellbeing and flourishing (MacIntyre 1999:22).

Each good can be said to be specific to a particular activity, such as hunting, feeding, play or sexual activity (MacIntyre 1999:63-64). So even though the 'goods' of animals and humans may differ, the notion of the good, for MacIntyre, is regarded as a spur to action. He argues that what is good for a particular animal is good for the animal as a member of that particular species, just as what is good for a person is good for that person *qua* human species. In his words, 'What a plant or animal needs is what it needs to flourish *qua* member of its particular species. And what it needs to flourish is to develop the distinctive powers that it possesses *qua* member of that species' (MacIntyre 1999:64; emphasis in original). He then clarifies these points in relation to what it is for a human to flourish, breaking down ascriptions of the good into a tripartite classification. Firstly, something can be judged as good with respect to how it performs a role or as a means to an end. Secondly, judgements about the good are also made about how someone performs with respect to a particular practice and its internal goods or standards. And thirdly, we can make judgements about goods in reference to how humans as a species should flourish, and thus the ordering of those practices in our lives (MacIntyre 1999:67).

So, in the case of humans, judgements about the good are both individual, in the sense that we may pursue them to further the pursuit of our own flourishing, and collective, in the sense that judgements are made about the prioritising of goods in pursuit of the good life within a society in order to enable our shared flourishing. This leads to the need for investigation and debate over which goods ought to take priority for a community to consider itself as flourishing appropriately. Though the ordering and type of goods vary from society to

society, this judging and reflecting about the pursuit of goods and their ordering all require certain capacities. MacIntyre emphasises that human beings need to be able to, '...learn to understand themselves as practical reasoners about goods' (MacIntyre 1999:67). What is important for MacIntyre is that individuals are enabled in their reasoning together in the ordering of goods such that they can come together to deliberate on the meaning and ordering of goods, as well as establishing the collective practices for achieving collective goods.

MacIntyre draws an analogy between human reasoning about goods and the way in which some other animals pursue their perceived goals. He does this to demonstrate that part of our identity, like animals, is a bodily identity. Beyond individual and collective reasoning about our goals and aims the strategies we use to achieve these are determined by our bodies, and thus our goals, too, are shaped by our individual and collective bodily capacities. As such, social relationships are key in enabling the individual to flourish. Like animals, our social relationships are indispensable to flourishing. However, what distinguishes us as humans is that, '...at times [humans] cannot flourish without arguing with others and learning from them about human flourishing' (MacIntyre 1999:68).

So, for MacIntyre humans are similar to but distinct from other animals, in that humans will have a particular way in which they flourish. But their flourishing is always determined by argument between selves about what it is to flourish and what goods are required to flourish. MacIntyre contends that humans inhabit the category of animal, but they are distinct within it in that they must be able to exercise reason through a continually developing and reflective discourse with others, generating a collective learning in order to flourish as humans. Animals differ from humans in that they are apparently driven by their immediate desires; they do not exhibit, so much, the reflective distancing from their wants and needs that humans learn to acquire and is distinctive of them (MacIntyre 1999:68). In this sense, then, MacIntyre is anthropocentric in his writing, but his anthropocentrism takes on board our similarities to other animals and argues that these similarities are important.

MacIntyre argues that the human self is different from the animal self in the sense that the former has a greater capacity for reflection on what are appropriate goals to pursue at any particular time, as well as how best to pursue them. Humans have a greater capacity than animals for distancing themselves from their immediate desires so as to reflect upon them. This capacity is arrived at through our interactions with others, through our learning through others - using language - who help to shape the way we think about what is good in any particular practice, and as people in general. However, like dolphins, great apes, and other animals, we are vulnerable, capable of being physically harmed, and so require other persons to take care of us in times when we are particularly vulnerable, e.g. childhood and old age, so that we can become, and sustain ourselves, as practical reasoners.

MacIntyre's ontology of the human self, then, is one that is both physical and psychological. Like animals, we are physically vulnerable, and we require others to look after our basic needs at times when we cannot meet them ourselves. Other humans in our close communities, either professionally or personally, take charge of looking out for these needs and in this sense, we can be said to be physically interdependent. Psychologically we are dependent on others to educate us in ways in which we are to pursue our goals, especially in infancy and adolescence, and these others provide us with role models and examples of good practice. We rely on our close friends and family to support us in understanding what is good and bad, to hold a reflective mirror up to ourselves to judge our own progress on the way to becoming independent reasoners. In such a way, we are dependent on others behaving generously and virtuously towards us in helping us to understand ourselves so that we can arrive at our own independence: 'We need those virtues, if we are to become independent practical reasoners, able to make up our own minds on the choices that confront us. But the acquisition of the necessary virtues, skills and self-knowledge is something that we in key part owe to particular others on whom we have had to depend' (MacIntyre 1999:96).

In this sense, MacIntyre can be thought of as adopting a communitarian position describing selves as mutually dependent upon one another. This is in utilising an ontological

argument to demonstrate that to understand the individual there must be an account of the social networks and interactions through which they are constituted. Within this construction, language is understood from a Wittgensteinian perspective to be a public phenomenon (MacIntyre 1999:95), rather than a private phenomenon. To flourish as independent practical reasoners, we are as reliant on the virtuous conduct of others as they are upon us. For MacIntyre, an account of the political and social structures for communities and societies must take account of this.

### ***The networks of the self***

So, for MacIntyre the process of practical reasoning, that is, the skill of reflection on and deciding on goods and the good life, is a social process. It takes place within a network of social relationships that enable us to develop, exercise, and help others to develop their practical reasoning. In this way the good of the individual is part of a larger communal good because the individual can only achieve their good if other individuals have enabled and prepared that individual and other individuals to do so: 'each of us achieves our good only if and insofar as others make our good their good by helping us through periods of disability to become ourselves the kind of human being - through the acquisition of the virtues - who makes the good of others her or his good' (MacIntyre 1999:108).

Furthermore, MacIntyre notes that on this understanding of social development and agency the relationships involved are not directly reciprocal. Individuals receive education and care from their parents when things go well, however, this care serves more as an example for the young to pass on to the following generation as they, in turn, are nurtured. More starkly, the elderly and disabled receive care that they cannot directly reciprocate. As such, care is often unconditional but is necessary as it enables individuals to exist and flourish.

Communities, then, for MacIntyre are networks of giving and receiving that flourish through individuals being enabled in their practical reasoning and enabling others to flourish.

This entails that the flourishing of a community will benefit all and not just those capable of acting independently to fulfil their own goals. It will also benefit those who are not at any given time capable of exercising their practical reasoning, such as the young, old, disabled and ill. In fact, for MacIntyre, the flourishing of these individuals is an indicator of the flourishing of the whole community (MacIntyre 1999:109). This is one possible route for us to take in constructing a green political theory sensitive to the needs of both the human and ecological community. It is best for humans to flourish in such a way that the flourishing of other humans, future generations and non-human entities are enabled.

Communitarians, including MacIntyre, have been subject to the criticism that they endorse forms of exclusivity, parochialism and paternalism (see Kymlicka 1989, Moller Okin 1989 for example). Kymlicka takes issue with Sandel's arguments in favour of a politics of the common good and is generally critical of the notion of communities following shared conceptions of the good. He argues that the governments of local communities in the past, such as New England townships in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, may well have been able to pursue a politics of the common good. But, this was, '...partly because women, atheists, Indians, and the propertyless were all excluded from membership.' (Kymlicka 1989:88). In other words, the only way in which these communities could follow a common good was to exclude those who may challenge it. This resulted in a very paternalistic form of politics lead by a narrow political community. For Kymlicka communitarianism represents a return to this type of politics.

By way of response to this kind of criticism MacIntyre is keen to point out that within his construction individuals are not entirely subordinated to the good of the community. The goods of the community for MacIntyre are the goods of the individual - or at least this is what an independent practical reasoner would have realised - that the flourishing of the community is the flourishing of the networks which support individuals in their independence and in their practical reasoning. Furthermore, MacIntyre notes that individuals will have other goods which they desire, such as the goods of family. For MacIntyre, the individual is responsible for the ordering of goods in their life. In structuring the idea of a flourishing community in this way, he



is moving away from the stigma of parochialism and paternalism that dog those characterised as communitarian. Key to the flourishing of the individual is the flourishing of the community, but a community can only be said to be flourishing when its individuals are enabled as independent practical reasoners via the practice of the virtues which regulate networks of giving and receiving within those communities (MacIntyre 1999: 113).

### ***Acknowledging nature in politics: A two-sided relationship***

I argue that in thinking about relationships, of giving and receiving between people, MacIntyre's construction gives us a useful conceptual tool with which to think about the way nature is represented in politics. At this point, however, it is worth considering MacIntyre's criticism of rational choice theory as it illuminates not just of the way in which we may misrepresent relationships between people but also people and the environment. MacIntyre contrasts his construction with rational choice theory which is a competing conception of the relationship between the good of the individual and the good of the community. This alternative conception is one in which rational choice and bargaining determine the networks in which individuals are engaged. Arrangements are entered into based upon their weighed advantages to us as individuals, and rational choice is seen as separate to the idea of sympathy which is viewed as a sentimental disposition or preference to be cultivated by the individual. MacIntyre cites David Gauthier as providing a classical definition of this type of view in which relationships are either of rational bargaining or sympathetic type. On this dualist understanding, rational choice can only be extended to relationships that involve 'cooperative bargaining' whilst, 'Animals, the unborn and congenitally handicapped' because they sit outside of any sort of mutual bargaining can only receive sympathy (Gauthier 1986:286 in MacIntyre 1999:115).

In this dichotomous picture of rationality and sympathy, the problem that is caused when reason and sympathy are alienated from one another is that, '...reason, as understood

by the rational choice theorist, provides no direction for our sympathies' (MacIntyre 1999:115). On MacIntyre's reading of rational choice theory, relationships would appear to be either rational bargaining relationships such as those of the market, or affective relationships, but not both. One is either a preference-maximising egoist or a saint-like altruist, and there is little account of situations where sympathy is rational and reason sympathetic. Furthermore, those not capable of entering into debate and barter over the distribution of goods, because they cannot express the benefits which will be returned for being treated sympathetically, such as non-human animals and the handicapped, are excluded from our 'affective sympathies' (MacIntyre 1999:115). MacIntyre takes particular issue with this exclusion in the work of the classical economist Adam Smith.

MacIntyre's argument is that these two types of relationship should not be thought of as distinct in this way: 'Market relationships can only be sustained by being embedded in certain types of local non-market relationship, relationships of uncalculated giving and receiving, if they are to contribute to overall flourishing, rather than as they so often in fact do, undermine and corrupt communal ties' (MacIntyre 1999:117). So, the relationships of giving and receiving that sustain individuals within society assume aspects of both affective ties and market relations. To drastically separate the two is destructive of both the social networks that sustain individuals and the ecological relationships which sustain our communities and the communities of others.

MacIntyre uses the example of the baker, brewer and butcher from Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1976) in which Smith famously stated that it was not due to their 'benevolence' but to their 'self interest' that we ought to be grateful for our dinner. MacIntyre introduces an affective element and asks us to suppose that one of the retailers is found collapsing from a heart attack upon our entry to the shop. If we were to turn around and leave simply to buy from one of his competitors we would be thought of as having badly undermined our relationship to this person, including the part of the relationship through which material exchange takes place. More appropriately, we would call for help and then wait

until succour arrived. We would probably see ourselves as having failed to live up to our own conception of our selves had we done nothing. MacIntyre is illustrating the way in which the market-type relationships of rational choice theory are sustained through affective relationships, in such a way that the two are not best thought of as distinct types of relationship but mutually enabling, and at times overlapping, relationships between individuals. He asserts that a failure to perceive our relationships in this overlapping sense, and thence to conduct our relationships as being both of market and non-market sympathetic types, undermines the ties of community: 'Market relationships can only be sustained by being embedded in certain types of local nonmarket relationship, relationships of uncalculated giving and receiving, if they are to contribute to overall flourishing, rather than, as they so often, in fact, do, undermine and corrupt communal ties' (MacIntyre 1999:117).

I propose that it is also fitting to think of our relationship to the natural world from which we extract resources in this way, especially when we represent nature in politics. To simply extract resources for our own calculated benefit often undermines the ability of the natural world to provide us with future resources. It also fails to account for the various statuses of the environment as habitat, home, and source of other types of good to us, in much the same way as MacIntyre's account here explains that the relationship of vendor to customer is inadequately conceived in rational choice theory. It seems that were we to purely extract or pollute, without thought to sustaining our environments, we would be lacking in affection towards these environments, an affectation necessary to sustain these environments and the entities within them. In other words, we ought to care about the environment as well as using the environment. Without one side the other may fail. This is a central insight that MacIntyre can lend to a green perspective.

Exchange relationships between the natural world and the human will be sustained through affective relationships as well as extractive or exchange relationships such as resource extraction: 'Norms of giving and receiving are then to some large degree presupposed both by our affective ties and our market relationships. Detach them from this background

presupposition in social practice and each becomes a source of vice: on the one hand a romantic and sentimental overvaluation of feeling as such, on the other a reduction of human activity to economic activity' (MacIntyre 1999:117-118). Such a conception helps in a practical understanding of the 'spiritual' nature of some of ecologism which can be seen as an attempt to realise better norms of giving and receiving when dealing with the non-human environment and non-human agents. This has become the case because the idea of exchange and affectation have become divorced and dichotomised such that we have an 'either-or' perspective on our environment. Either it is a site for resource extraction or a sump for externalities, or it is of special aesthetic importance. Using MacIntyre's account of the networks of giving and receiving, it becomes possible to account for environments as habitats in which multiple individuals and communities are interdependent and require both affection and exchange in order to be enabled in their flourishing. It would be useful to embed such thinking within political deliberation about the environment.

### ***The relationships of the dependent rational animal***

Though these types of relationship, according to MacIntyre, are necessary for the flourishing of a community and its individuals, they are not innate. Thus, they must be cultivated, and for this, he thinks, an education in the virtues is indispensable. For MacIntyre, these networks of giving and receiving work best when individuals, educated towards a less simplistic dichotomy between egoism and altruism in their relationships, and towards, '...both our [own] good and the good of others,' (MacIntyre 1999: 160) in the sense that our good and the good of others, is, in part, bound together.

MacIntyre's issue is that benevolence, as understood by the prevailing interpretation that it is as a matter of private preference, has not received the scrutiny it deserves in ethical and political theory. As such, it would seem from his critique of neoliberalism that nurturing behaviour could be viewed as an act of either altruism or reassurance to the self of its own

good will. In such a circumstance, the individuals in receipt of benevolence tend to be regarded as generalised others, '...whose only relationship to us is to provide an occasion for the exercise of *our* benevolence, so that we can reassure ourselves about our own good will - in place of those particular others with whom we must learn to share common goods, and participate in ongoing relationships' (MacIntyre 1999:119, emphasis in original). This could also count as a statement about the way green concerns for the environment are often portrayed by those who feel that such sentiment is an altruistic preference towards an over-sentimentalised nature. The importance of MacIntyre's work here serves as a counter to these types of criticism. In relation to Eckersley's concerns as a green political theorist, MacIntyre's work touches on her apprehension that environmentalism as a practice can become detached from particular experience of the environment. Eckersley characterises such an environmental activism as an exercise carried out by jet-lagged globe-trotters. As a larger cultural and social practice, concern for the environment may be found in just such a regard for interrelationships as MacIntyre's approach is suggesting here. This approach is one in which the environment is acknowledged, not as some abstract other whose value is either aesthetic or instrumental, but as a diverse set of entities and states, from which we take, but to which we are thereby indebted. We should act in such a way as to ensure its continued existence, in the same way as we would seek to ensure the security of our own unfolding in our interactions with nature. In such a conception we are not simply calculating value to our own immediate ends, nor are we caught up in some sort of irrational, romantic sentimentalism, rather we are in a relationship of both affectation and exchange in which each predisposition reinforces the other. By taking from nature we acknowledge that we are indebted to it through our mutual interdependences between ourselves, other entities and their biotic and abiotic components.

### ***The virtues of acknowledged dependence and just generosity***

The regard for other selves that best enables MacIntyre's dependent rational animals to flourish is to be found in the virtues of acknowledged dependence. Virtues play an 'indispensable part' in MacIntyre's account of the development and agency of the self, particularly in moving from dependence on the reasoning of others to independence in practical reasoning (MacIntyre 1999:120). One key virtue which he refers to is that of 'just generosity' – i.e., 'just, generous, beneficent' actions towards others done from a position of 'pity' rather than charity. He is keen to point out that this pity is not a sentimentalised pity but rather one guided by reason affected by our communal interdependences (MacIntyre 1999:124).

The practices of this uncalculated giving and receiving are to be exercised within the various networks of giving and receiving that the self inhabits. MacIntyre states that these practices do extend to others, specifically passing strangers, which the self and its community may encounter, as well as those in urgent need within the community. We act with an uncalculated just generosity toward these others because of a commitment to the unconditional nature of generosity which is required to sustain the relationships through which our common good is achieved. This idea of 'rational pity' could be extended to guide concern for the environment that we encounter through our material and psychological exchange - such encounters may be thought to place us in relationships which ought best to be governed by such a predisposition. Thus, it may also be shown that care for the environment does not simply stem from an irrational form of sentimentalism, but also from a regard to something owed in an exchange-based relationship, governed by just generosity, in order to sustain this relationship so that all flourish. However, just generosity itself is founded upon the further virtue of being truthful with ourselves about the extent of our interdependence (MacIntyre 1999:127). That is, we should be aware of our dependent nature and realise that we must also sustain others in order to sustain the communities on which we are dependent.

The virtues of acknowledged dependence require that we should be honest with ourselves just how much we depend on others (MacIntyre 1999:151) and act where appropriate to acknowledge this dependence with just generosity.

### ***The political and social structures of the common good***

So, what are the social and political structures through which these norms of giving and receiving are to be administered? To answer this question, we first need to understand what politics is for MacIntyre. His account of politics echoes a communitarian view in which politics is a *dialogue* about the meaning and distribution of common and individual goods. The meaning and understanding of the good emerges from deliberation. This contrasts with a deontological approach in which politics, on the face of it, is concerned with justice in the distribution of goods. For MacIntyre, politics is the act of reasoning 'together about the common good' (MacIntyre 1999:140). This is important because, echoing a general communitarian theme, he says that one can only identify one's individual good by identifying common goods which in turn can only be intuited fully by, '...contributing to and learning from shared deliberation with those others whose common goods they are' (MacIntyre 1999:140). From a green perspective, it should also entail that political deliberation and decision-making take place closer, spatially to the environments concerned, so as to appreciate all interests, and to enable the incorporation of environmental goods and interests. I shall tackle this point in the next chapter.

A second point that MacIntyre makes about the definition of politics is to reinforce the conception of goods as having a vital communal aspect. This is such that the part that goods play in one's life cannot be divorced from decisions about what part these goods are given in communal life. The example he gives is one where an individual greatly values their role in the arts of theatre – such a value would be difficult to realise were the arts not given some priority in the 'allocation of communal resources'. And so, as with Michael Sandel, politics is a good in

common which cannot be known alone (Sandel 1998). Politics is a concern for the common and individual good, and a proper regard for people's goods may require positive action on the part of our collective institutions in order to enable their pursuit. Just such a pursuit may be that of achieving a sustainable relationship with our environment and the entities within it.

MacIntyre's account of the political structures of the common good is at odds with conceptions of politics in which political activity is the domain of the state and carried out by a minority of the population. For MacIntyre, modern states can only function properly, with the large majority only participating sporadically at election times, through delivering, '...highly simplified and impoverished information,' to the electorate (MacIntyre 1999:142). He admits a place for the resources of the state in answering the needs of its communities - fire fighters, police, health care to name but a few - but the site of most meaningful political agency and thought is the community. It is at the level of the local community that the times and ways in which the resources of the state are required are most crucially decided upon (MacIntyre 1999:142).

MacIntyre seeks to differentiate himself from communitarians at this point. He is critical of communitarians who he says have made the mistake of attempting to attribute state politics to the practices and values of the local community. MacIntyre, elsewhere, comments that communitarians have attacked liberals over the very point on which they are at their best, i.e. defending the nation, region, globe from parochial interest: 'It is therefore a mistake, the communitarian mistake, to attempt to infuse the politics of the state with the values and modes of participation in the local community' (MacIntyre 1999:142). Further, he is quick to remark that in and of themselves local communities are not necessarily good. They must be governed by norms of just generosity and shared deliberation in order to avoid prejudice, narrowness, complacency and other vices.

So, to be of value in sustaining the shared achievement of the common good, the face-to-face encounters and deliberation of the local community must be supplemented by the virtues of acknowledged dependence, such as just generosity and truthfulness in deliberation,



to avoid the parochialism sometimes associated with the practices of local communities. All is not lost, however, as he can supplement his argument for decentralising deliberation and political institutions to the level of the local and particular with some brief historical examples such as the fishing communities of New England that successfully endured both an adverse climatic and economic context (MacIntyre 1999:143). MacIntyre advocates comparative studies of local communities to demonstrate the diversity of networks of giving and receiving and their accompanying institutions existing in a multiple of contexts (MacIntyre 1999:143).

Regarding the politics of the local community, MacIntyre's parting thought is that we ought to bear in mind three things. These three elements, I argue, contain green corollaries. Firstly, that the practice of deliberation is always imperfect, and that it is the ability over time to overcome limitations that should strike us. Thus, 'The exercise of practical relationships in communities always has a history and it is the direction of that history that is important' (MacIntyre 1999:144). Imbalances of power within deliberation work against perfectionist situations such as the ideal speech situation. Our democracies, MacIntyre's comment suggests, should continue to evolve through deliberation. Framed by the virtues of acknowledged dependence politics may be more likely to evolve in a more environmentally sensitive direction. A direction informed by both a better scientific understanding of our environment and permitting other less instrumental views on nature to enter the deliberative process.

Secondly, the politics of the local community is a politics that seeks the common good of all, and it is this which governs the distribution of resources for individual and group needs. Inequality should be limited where possible as it is likely to generate conflict and obscure an orientation to the common good (MacIntyre 1999:144). For MacIntyre, this type of society would be at odds with a consumerist conception of society, as the networks which sustain uncalculated giving and receiving would require sheltering from the 'forces of outside markets' (MacIntyre 1999:144). Indeed, this is what ecologists concerned with the instrumental treatment of nature have called for, in a sense a shielding of nature from the market and its consumerism.

And thirdly, such communities attach importance to the needs of the vulnerable such as children and the disabled such that each is able to recognise, ‘...what they once were... [and] what they are moving towards becoming’ (MacIntyre 1999:146). This awareness is a condition for sustaining the networks of giving and receiving that serve the common good. From a green perspective, I would add that the recognition of vulnerability should also include the vulnerability of our shared environment and of our selves: an acknowledgement that we and our environments are mutually vulnerable and interdependent in our flourishing.

So, in addition to MacIntyre’s ontological argument, what is called for is a form of local deliberative democracy. This is the type of democracy in which face-to-face engagements are enabled. In such a way individuals are able to learn about each other’s goods, and the goods of their own community and to further their own movement towards attaining those goods. These deliberative democracies have at their heart a concern for the whole community, and especially for the vulnerable and those not able to directly represent themselves. From a green perspective, deliberative democracy has also been suggested as a mode of politics in which concerns for the environment may be best expressed and advocated (see Dryzek 2009 for example), and it is interesting that MacIntyre’s argument converges again with ecologism on the practice of democracy at this point. In this particular guise, it may be said that local deliberative structures ought to be designed so as to take into account, not just the dependent nature of individuals upon each other, but also of the dependence of individuals on their environments, and vice versa. Deliberative structures, devolved to the local level, might be better suited to sustaining environments as well as utilising them for material functions, especially when supplemented by the virtues of acknowledged dependence, such as just generosity.

I will return to a fuller treatment of the type of politics suggested by MacIntyre in the closing chapter, but in sum, a reading of MacIntyre’s work yields much that is useful for green political theory and ecologism in particular. MacIntyre and green political theorists share common ground in that his argument draws upon ethical thought which sees humans and

some non-human animals as sharing certain essential characteristics which make them worthy of ethical and political concern. Chief amongst which is the characteristic of vulnerability and, therefore, a dependence on others (and the environment) in learning to flourish in the particular ways in which their species flourish.

For humans, currently, the aim of acknowledging this dependence is to achieve independence in their practical reasoning, as, in order to reason independently, we are dependent on others. The best way to ensure that humans reach a good level of independent practical reasoning, where possible, is to cultivate the virtues of acknowledged dependence in intra-human relationships. From a green point of view, we might argue that we are, in turn, embedded within, and dependent on, an environment full of interdependent and vulnerable entities. Because of our use of this environment, we owe others a debt of gratitude serviced by just generosity in order to enable the continued flourishing of these environments. This is because we, and other non-human entities, are all vulnerable to environmental harms. A green position that takes from MacIntyre's work, here, would argue that we ought to acknowledge our dependence on our shared environment as a statement of why we ought to care for that environment.

If we are to follow MacIntyre's argument to achieve this vision what we would require is a more localised form of deliberative politics, in addition to the broader deliberation of national assemblies. Such devolved deliberation should reflect selves' concerns for their environments as at the local level they can appreciate, represent, and meaningfully enact more sustainable individual and collective relationships with these environments. Furthermore, individuals within these polities ought to recognise the mutual dependence and vulnerability of other individuals regarding the environment in decision-making. I will cover this point in much more detail in the following chapter. However, at this point, it will suffice to say that MacIntyre's ontology of the human as dependent rational animal is amenable to an enlightened anthropocentric approach which acknowledges our dependence on our environments. I shall return to the issue of deliberative democracy as an expression of our

interdependent ontology more fully in the next chapter after some initial conclusions about MacIntyre's and Eckersley's arguments in the previous chapter.

## **Conclusion**

In response to Eckersley's question, 'Does communitarianism provide the appropriate insights, conceptual resources and norms to guide political communities along ecologically sustainable paths?' (Eckersley 2006:91), we can answer 'yes' on several counts. Eckersley draws on communitarianism to argue for the inclusion of individuals' particular, place-based, psychological attachments to be taken into account in making decisions about our environments. Such consideration not only acts as a counter to arbitrary 'consumption' of the environment at the local level but also provides a basis for empathising with others globally whose environments are potentially threatened by environmentally destructive practices. In other words, Eckersley argues for empathy as a key element of green political thought and practice, building upon localised, place-based attachments.

This is an important step to make in green political arguments against contemporary abstract, neoliberal thought. However, I argue that we can, and must, take this further when drawing on communitarian work. This is because place-based identification and empathy are vulnerable to the charge of subjectivity, in that one person's ideal environment may be very different to another's, and this may lead to confusion at the point at which arguments between competing claims on the environment have to be arbitrated. Place-based identification may even still allow for resources to be extracted at will, and without recompense, based on the idea of a given individual's preferences for consumables. What we need to draw from communitarian argument is precisely what it is about the environment that gives it worth beyond its value in appropriation.

This is where MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals* is so vitally important. Not only does he suggest that we ought to rethink the radical separation of the ontological categories

human and animal in traditional Western thought, but also that we can draw on our understanding of animal behaviour when thinking about the human individual in political and ethical theory. For MacIntyre the human is an animal like all others in that throughout its life it is dependent on others in its community for its autonomous functioning and decision-making. Political and ethical thinking needs to bear this in mind when designing institutions and rules because a breakdown in the norms of giving and receiving required to sustain the individual represents a collapse of a social and political community; the norms of giving and receiving from those able to those dependent need to be sustained. As we saw, MacIntyre argues that we need the virtues of acknowledged dependence, such as just generosity and truthfulness, in order for communities to be able to flourish or live well.

It is then a short step from this insight to the claim that what ecogism can take from this is that, given our collective, fundamental dependence on our local and globally shared environment, we need to establish norms not just of 'receiving from' but also 'giving back' to those environments which enable the continued independent flourishing of those environments and the entities within them. At root, political theory needs to admit our shared fundamental dependence on our environment and, from a deeper green perspective, the dependence of that or those environments and their plethora of entities upon each other.

This will not please all greens, as the human is still at the centre of this picture as the valuing and perceiving agent, or as the agent responsible for politics. What I admit in this argument is that humans are also animals and that, as animals for whom politics is perhaps its unique function, to paraphrase Aristotle and Marx, the individual is constituted through various communities, such as family and friends, as well as its environment, and that these other entities, family, friends, colleagues and environment also share the same condition of dependence. This approach takes seriously the notion that the interests of the environment, and its plurality of organisms and entities, are bound up with, and ought to inform the interests of, the self. This is because the self is as dependent on those diverse unfolding entities and their habitats as they are upon each other and upon us. In this regard, MacIntyre's

communitarian ontological formulation provides a reason for why individuals and their communities ought to be concerned for their environments when taking political decisions that affect not only human selves -- past present, and distant-- but other entities with whom we are interdependent.

Our interdependence needs to be considered at the political level as an issue that is common to all communities, and between all communities and individuals. The individual is, thus, a cooperative venture as much as it is an individual preference-maximiser, and politics needs to acknowledge this in all cases in order that individuals and their environments can flourish. Politics must allow for norms which are just not only in distribution between individuals, but within and between individuals and their communities, and between communities and the environments on which they are dependent, and within which are entities in a similar state of dependence. This is because the flourishing of individuals and their environments is mutually intertwined. As such, individuals need to be able to articulate ideas about goods and the good life for the individual, its community and the environment at a substantive political level. Furthermore, from a green point of view, the dependence on our environment, and the dependence of our environment on us to flourish is, if not a universal, then a significantly generalisable point. That is a generalisable point of connection between individuals, communities and environments, and their issues from the local, through to the regional, to the national and global levels.

To demonstrate more fully the implications of utilising such an ontological argument for acknowledged dependence, the subsequent chapters will examine the deliberative political institutions that would enable such an embedded self to acknowledge dependence and enact just generosity within its community and environment. Chapter 6 and 7 will return to develop MacIntyre's brief but illustrative comments about particular forms of deliberative democracy. Before doing so, in chapter 5, I will demonstrate the link between ecologism and deliberative democracy, prior to demonstrating how the type of decentralised deliberation suggested by MacIntyre can be brought together with ecologism on deliberative democracy.

## Chapter 5

### Deliberative democracy in ecologism and green political thought

#### *Introduction*

Having seen how MacIntyre's conception of the dependent rational animal can be combined with eco-centric conceptions of the self within ecologism, in this chapter and the next, I turn to look at the implications of taking an eco-communitarian approach to thinking about the deliberative political structures that may foster the virtues of acknowledged dependence. This chapter lays the ground work for arguing for a synthesis between MacIntyre's thought on deliberation and green perspectives. In this chapter, I propose that ecologism can accommodate deliberative democracy, just as MacIntyre's arguments do, and so is amenable to a synthesis with his arguments in terms of deliberative democracy. A virtue-ethical approach of reciprocal acknowledged dependence between networks of people and the non-human world is developed across both chapters to mirror MacIntyre's approach in *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999). The case for this synthesis in terms of an ontological argument, that sees the self as interdependent with the natural world, was made in the previous chapter. We must now look at deliberative democracy because we are still left with the pressing question of how environmental concerns and interests can effectively, and meaningfully, be recognised at the collective political level. I will examine how deliberative democracy has been advocated by green political theory out-with ecologism, looking primarily at the work of John Dryzek and Graham Smith. In doing so I will present the arguments for, and propose an outline of, green deliberative democracy that will serve as a foundation for the synthesis developed in chapter 6.

MacIntyre views small-scale deliberative structures that allow for, and enable, face-to-face interactions and facilitate conversations as necessary for citizens to form the character of

their society (1999:142). Arguably this view is very much in line with the deliberative turn in green political thought that occurred from the end of the 90s and into the 2000s. However, some green political theorists have been concerned that such face-to-face deliberation does not necessarily lead to green outcomes (see for example Arias-Moldanado 2007) and are vulnerable to, or even embed, corruption and manipulation as a result of power inequalities (see Sanders 1997; Young 2003). In response to these concerns, efforts have been redoubled by theorists such as Kadlec and Freidman (2007), and Dryzek (2009) to defend deliberative democracy. In this spirit, I also argue in favour of a deliberative form of democracy that can encompass the concerns of communitarians, eco-centric theorists, and green political theorists who are equally in favour of deliberation as a method of enabling more sustainable outcomes from political processes. My aim here is to build on these accounts and to advocate a form of deliberative politics at the local level framed by the virtues of acknowledged dependence. I aim to integrate MacIntyre's desire to generate a politics in which citizens acknowledge their dependence on each other, and the eco-centric idea of acknowledging human interdependence with nature.

This chapter will proceed by first examining the debates within ecologism, and green political theory more generally, about the types of institution required to better encompass green concerns. I will look at the work of William Ophuls (1974) that seemed to suggest an affinity between green political thought and authoritarianism. I then turn to the works by Dobson (1996), Eckersley (1995), and Dryzek (2009) to show how greens have developed strong arguments advocating a deliberative approach within ecologism. In the final section of this chapter, I will examine how deliberative institutions have been structured by greens to enable green outcomes and processes in decision making which challenge the conception that environmental problems are simply technical problems to be solved by experts.



## ***The tension between ecologism and deliberative democracy***

AS we have seen ecologism is concerned with promoting more sustainable human-environment relations, in a manner that may be considered radically different to current patterns of consumption and appropriation in a liberal-capitalist society. Within political theory, ecologism is concerned with ends and a particular view or set of views, about the good life. As such, it conflicts with deontological liberalism's priority of the right over the good. Such a picture, however, has at times, also seemed to paint ecologism as being in conflict with the idea of democracy, so closely tied to liberalism. An initial strand of green thought in the 1970s seemed to suggest that the best way to achieve green ends would be through some form of authoritarian rule. For example, William Ophuls is well known for arguing that a type of Platonic system of rule would be required for what he regarded as a forthcoming era of ecological scarcity, in order to ensure that societies would survive in a sustainable manner. His view, in the 1970s, was that technically competent experts would have to be empowered to guide states through an era in which they approached their ecological limits (Ophuls 1974:40).

His view suggested a type of neo-Platonic politics as a way of overcoming the perceived impossibility of individuals accepting the limits to growth that constituted a basis of many of the green imperatives at the time. However, the citizens of Ophuls' ecologically-foundering state were assumed to be self-interested individuals with the mind-sets of consumers, who would not, or could not, make the sacrifices required to achieve green aims in a world of increasing scarcity.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, rule by an enlightened elite seemed to be the answer for him.

Dobson (2000) along with Paehlke (1989) note that what theorists such as Ophuls were most concerned with was the need for social unity as a cure for environmental problems in the face of growing neoliberal individualism. Dobson makes the point, however, that the

---

<sup>1</sup> In arguing for a democratic system, I do not ignore Ophuls' concern about the individuals involved in politics and praxis. In fact, the nature of the citizen and its interests is a key focus of this thesis and the subsequent chapter.

'social unity' of ecologism, 'is not at all incompatible with democracy, of course, but it may be in tension with the individualism associated with liberalism' (Dobson 2000:115). In drawing upon MacIntyre in this thesis I agree with Dobson, that it is the individualism rather than the democracy which creates the tension between ecologism and neoliberal dominance over democracy.

Another (in this case unintentional) source of authoritarianism in green thinking comes from Robert Goodin (1992) when he stated that green political theory ought to prioritise its fundamental values above and beyond notions of any type of political agency. His understanding of green political thought at the time was that there is no *necessary* connection between green axioms and green agency, and that, 'In cases of conflict... the green theory of value - and the ends that it would have us promote - simply must, within the logic of the greens' own theory, take priority over the green theory of agency' (Goodin 1992:120). This poses a challenge to eco-centric elements of green political theory that, I claim, by and large, argue for democratic means and ends. Goodin's work serves to remind us, however, that even though an accommodating and fruitful relationship between democracy and ecologism may be possible, it is by no means implicit.

Since Ophuls' time, there has been a distinct move away from aligning green politics with authoritarian political structures towards seeing democratic mechanisms as the way to achieve a greener society. Much of the preoccupation of green theorists dealing with institutional design, including Goodin, in the first instance, has been in demonstrating the link between democratic processes and green values. In so doing they have had to explain what type of democracy would best achieve green outcomes and fit with green principles.

### ***Moving towards democracy***

In a work dedicated to examining the connections between democracy and ecologism Andrew Dobson (1996) notes that there is a tension between ecologism's focus on ends and

democratic thought's apparent focus on process. For example, we have seen in chapter 1 that Goodin's focus primarily on green ends, need not imply any sort of fair political process. There would then appear to be some conflict between the procedural element of democracy, concerned with rights, and the consequentialist nature of ecologism concerned with achieving green ends (Dobson 1996:134).

Michael Saward also hypothesises that there is nothing that intrinsically ties democracy to ecologism, such that the former could not be given up if greens felt it necessary to achieve a particular outcome. Democracy, for Saward, is best understood as responsive rule, '...meaning that rulers are responsive to the felt wishes of (a majority of) citizens' (Saward 1993:68). For him, in a liberal democracy, this is straightforwardly the case as individuals have freedoms that cannot be over ruled, and this means that such individuals can express their preferences fairly (equally) in decision making. He terms this a 'natural compatibility' (Saward 1993:69) between liberalism and democracy. Saward notes that modern liberalism constrains democracy with its own view of the good by privileging the value of radically autonomous individuals and their property (Saward 1993:76), reflecting criticisms made earlier in this thesis. However, in suggesting a radically different theory of the good to which a society is *required* to adhere, ecologism, at first glance, seems not to have the same natural compatibility with democracy.

Saward (1993) suggests that rather than view democracy as a mechanism it should be seen as a form of culture in which ideas and truths can be tried out and tested in the public realm. His first advice to greens is to avoid talking in terms of absolute truths and certainties (i.e. talking in terms of imperatives and the intrinsic value of nature) and, instead, to move towards persuading people in the public realm of the merit of a more sustainable world view. By moving to such a position, greens move from a tenuous relationship with democracy to using democratic society as a medium through which to grow and develop their ideas. As such, ecologism may also be able to shape democracy to significantly take into account the values of selves as embedded within their environments.

Saward quotes Dobson to demonstrate the requirement for democracy in ecology: ‘...political change will only occur once people think more differently or, more particularly, that sustainable living must be prefaced by sustainable thinking’ (Dobson 1990:140 quoted in Saward 1993:77). The implication is that democracy, and particularly deliberative democracy, allows people to arrive at decisions through a degree of deliberation and consensus which entails them thinking about the issues at hand, modifying views and being sensitive to the multiple concerns involved in issues of environmental sustainability. Democracy serves to give green outcomes a legitimacy deriving from consent. This is far more durable over time, in terms of intrinsically motivating citizens to care about their environment and defending it in deliberation, than the imposition of policy through authoritarian institutions.

In using eco-centric conceptions of the self and arguments about the good life it is possible to say that the democratic legitimacy argument above is also supplemented by the affected interests argument. An example of this kind of argument is that put forward by Wouter Achterberg. Achterberg argues that the lifestyle changes required to solve an environmental crisis, ‘...demand voluntariness, understanding and the (conditional) preparedness of all people involved...’ in order to have a lasting effect (Achterberg (1993:82). In other words, people need to ‘buy in’ to the kinds of changes needed to be made to reduce our impact on our environments for any meaningful and lasting change to happen. Only in such a way can solutions, often requiring radical lifestyle change, to environmental problems gain and retain protracted support.

The response I propose is that this voluntariness and consent could derive from participants in democratic institutions who view themselves as interdependent with others and their environment. They do so through acknowledging their interdependence, seeing themselves as sharing interests with the environment, rather than as narrowly self-interested consumers. I shall say more on this in the next chapter; I would now show how democracy has been advocated as a means of realising eco-centric green concerns. I will then argue that the

proposals within green political theory and ecologism for deliberative democracy are in line with MacIntyre's view of the role of deliberative democracy.

### ***Green ends and democracy***

One of the key ways to break down the apparent tension between ecologism and democratic thought is to question the presupposition that ecologism is concerned exclusively with ends whilst democracy is exclusively concerned with means and that, thus, the two are incompatible. Saward has been concerned with this question, and he argues that green outcomes can be linked to democratic processes.

Saward argues this from a deontological rights-based point of view. This perspective uses a particular understanding of democracy as being based upon, and ensuring, equality between equal persons. On this understanding, all persons are seen as equally fallible and so are entitled to an equal voice. In order to protect this equality, certain 'basic democratic rights' (Dahl in Saward 1996: 84) are required, for example, freedom of speech or the right to own one's own property. These are generally set above other rights and above compromise by being made substantive through a written constitution or by convention. Without these rights, it is argued, democracies cannot operate properly since free speech is a basic requirement where people are equally entitled to exchange views so as to have a chance to inform decision making. Saward argues that it is this structure on which greens may draw to move their concerns beyond personal private preferences within a democracy to holding sway over majority decisions - via the mechanism of the democratic constitution which can secure a green democratic right (Saward 1996:84).

Saward makes the case for this green democratic right by showing that certain environmental conditions are necessary for preserving the existence of democratic equality. In particular, he examines rights to health in relation to environmental risks (Saward 1996:84). He focuses on three criteria connected to risk and harm that would prompt for the application of

a green democratic right. Firstly, the risk would be incurred from exogenous harm. Secondly, this is a risk which is preventable. And thirdly, this a risk that could hamper 'physical mobility' or 'become life consuming'. When appearing together these factors should, '...trigger the latent green democratic right to not suffer the risk in question' (Saward 1996:87). This green right should be 'triggered' so as to ensure that equal participation in a democracy, by citizens, remains possible.

Saward states that global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer (a topic that was of special relevance at the time he was writing) may constitute just such types of risk which citizens of a democracy should be shielded from as part of a basic and equal right to health. Further, if such a right holds for present generations because we hold democracy as a core value, then we ought not to deny future generations a similar right. In such a way, and after considering objections such as the measurement of risk, the feasibility of prevention and the desirability of entrenching rights (Saward 1996:88-91), Saward argues that core environmental concerns about future generations and large scale environmental risks ought to be part of democratic theory and should, therefore, be given substantive pride of place within a democratic structuring of institutions. Others have followed this route of connecting ecologism to democracy through a rights-based approach. Tim Hayward argues that certain fundamental environmental rights should be argued for as legitimate procedural, positive and negative rights within a constitutional democracy (Hayward 2002:254).

It has been pointed out, however, that the argument above, though showing a necessary connection between the concerns of ecologism and of democratic thought, fails to rule out a similar connection between ecologism and any other type of politics. Dobson applies this criticism to a similar argument from what he terms environmental 'preconditions' - rights which secure the link between democracy and green outcomes - to the argument of John Dryzek, arguing that, '...in underwriting the environment for the sake of the possibility of democratic communication, he [Dryzek] must also be underwriting it for the sake of the possibility of authoritarian communication' (Dobson 1996:138).

Dryzek's argument is similar to that of Saward's though it is made in terms of discursive democracy.<sup>2</sup> Dryzek suggests that ecosystems have to function to a certain standard in order to enable members of a democracy to communicate and deliberate and that this is a notion which may be widely agreed upon within a discursive democracy: 'The continuing integrity of the ecological systems on which human life depends could perhaps be a generalizable interest par excellence' (Dryzek 1990:55). Democracy cannot operate if participants are excluded through environmental harms such as resource depletion or fresh water contamination. Dobson acknowledges that Dryzek and Saward go some way to resolving the democracy/green tension by showing that both can focus on ends in the sense that democracy needs to ensure certain background conditions for a political system to function as a democracy. However, he points out that this does not just connect ecologism to democracy but could also connect green concerns to any other sort of political system, including authoritarian ones.

Dobson's initial suggestion to aid the reconciliation between democratic thought and green political theory is effectively to turn the formula above on its head to create an argument from preconditions. Rather than simply say that environmental criteria underlie the possibility and potential for democracy, Dobson points out that democracy may also be thought of as being a condition for the emergence of 'sustainable thinking' and green political ideas (Dobson 1996:139).

In developing this argument from preconditions, Dobson points back to the earlier argument made by Saward who uses a conception of democracy similar to that of J.S. Mill that democracy enables truths to emerge from its open-ended democratic arguments. This is part of the case for deliberative or discursive forms of democracy that enable participants not only

---

<sup>2</sup> Deliberative democracy and discursive democracy are often thought of as interchangeable terms and will be considered so for the purposes of this thesis. Discursive democracy is a notion developed in the green sense by John Dryzek with explicit reference to the work of Jürgen Habermas on communicative and instrumental rationality. Dryzek argues that what greens require in order to ensure a greener society is a strong civil society with free and equal communication shaping public ideas (see Dryzek 1995).

to put forward their perspectives but also to learn about and develop their views of the good life through debate, in which they also have to defend their own views from others involved. As Dryzek says: 'Deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other kinds of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgements, preferences, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception' (2000:1). In other words, deliberative democracy should be particularly important to greens because it is a process in which opinions, views and values can be changed and political culture reshaped with the possibility of society becoming green(er). This contrasts with a process in which pre-existing views remain fixed and are simply aggregated through voting, for example, and views of the good are confined to the private sphere – i.e. the process that we would normally associate with neoliberal democracy.

Dobson demonstrates that not only can democracy be concerned with ends but that green political theory can, and should, be concerned with procedures – or, in other words, that ecologism can be 'concerned at least as much as with the right as with the good' (1996:140). I shall return later to the second part of Dobson's argument at the close of this section after considering Eckersley's argument for connecting democracy as procedure to green ideas via a rights-based or procedural argument.

In terms of the advantages of deliberative democracy, sustainable practices that green thinking advocates, such as a low or zero carbon economy, advocacy of a pacified relationship with nature, or extensive public transport, can be adopted through a democratic process of deliberation which gives greens representation and voice. This is so long as greens are in some way open to value pluralism as part of a dialogue in which they can persuade others of their arguments. The great advantage of such a democratic process is that green outcomes are given democratic legitimacy and they are more likely to be seen as self-chosen ideas than imposed dictates. In such a way, the democratic process of deliberation not only gives legitimacy to green outcomes but also helps to genuinely motivate citizens, who have contributed to choosing these ideals, to pursue green(er) ends.



## ***Connecting ecologism and democracy***

Commenting on Saward's claim that liberalism and democracy are natural bedfellows, Eckersley states that ecologism could be connected to democracy utilising the same rights-based approach which modern liberalism has. In this approach liberal support for, and affiliation with, democracy stems from liberal principles of autonomy and justice that connect with democratic notions of equality and respect: 'The liberal principle of autonomy respects the rights of individuals to determine their own affairs; the liberal principle of justice demands that this respect be accorded to each and every individual' (Eckersley 1996:222). In this way, the preoccupation with the individual as an autonomous being, as opposed to being at least partly constituted by the community, is connected with democracy through a principle of justice, according to which each individual has equal respect.

I have shown earlier how this deontological liberal view of rights demonstrates a particular ontological perspective regarding the nature of the individual. Eckersley's formula here effectively takes this observation and gives it a green twist, to connect the green notion of autonomy with democracy in the same way in which liberalism connects individualism to democracy. In effect, if liberals can set up the democratic game in such a way as to link democracy 'naturally' with liberalism, then perhaps greens can do something similar. Eckersley argues that a defence of green autonomy based upon a green conception of the self is a firmer grounding for achieving green ends through democratic means (Eckersley 1996:223). I show later how MacIntyre's approach shares a close affinity with Eckersley's, in the sense that democracy is used as a way of ensuring and respecting the autonomy of the self as a socially and ecologically dependent individual.

Eckersley states that the basic democratic idea remains the notion of, '...respect for the inherent dignity and value of each and every individual' (Eckersley 1996:224). The first step she takes, and here she follows the work on environmental rights by Ted Benton (1993), is to connect a green conception of (individual) autonomy and rights with political (democratic)

rights. To this end, she quotes Benton, who writes: 'Human/animal continuity points to embodiment and habitat as features of moral relevance. Basic interests in bodily development, sustenance, health and reproduction, and in the ecological conditions of these, can be recognised as shared features of human and animal life' (Benton 1993:183 cited in Eckersley 1996:219). Benton attributes rights to non-human animals on the basis of shared characteristics along a continuum with humans, and this is not dissimilar to MacIntyre's observations on morally relevant characteristics humans share with certain non-human animals in *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999). Suffice to say that humans and other animals can be said to share 'morally relevant' features that entail their protection regarding rights

Eckersley reaffirms that the concepts of 'embodiment' and 'habitat' provide grounds in pressing for certain rights such as uncontaminated food, air, water and soil (Eckersley 1996:225). Further, because of this notion of embodiment these rights are related not just to individuals but to the wellbeing of the wider ecological communities in which they are embedded. This is not far removed from the argument I shall shortly be making, though I shall approach it from a communitarian rather than rights-based point of view. As Eckersley writes, 'Individuals do not simply enter into social and ecological relationships; rather they are constituted by these relations. In other words, social rights, environmental rights and political rights must be understood to be co-determining; both social and environmental rights must, therefore, be seen as part and parcel of citizenship rights' (Eckersley 1996:226). Here Eckersley is developing a green revision of the notion of autonomy, based on a particular ontology of the self as embedded in the environment, and this constitutes the basis for 'greening' the contents of citizenship rights that pertain to individuals and their communities. Eckersley demonstrates that individual rights cannot be abstracted from their social and ecological context, and the ecological right to an adequate environment is, in effect, shared by individuals and communities.

However, one of the difficulties with Eckersley's rights-based conception is, as Dobson notes, the problem of enforceability: how are these rights to be realised and enforced without

compromising the nature of rights as inviolable? One answer may be to approach the issue from a communitarian and deliberative angle, in which concerns for nature are weighed up and considered through ongoing dialogue. The task for greens is to have their concerns and claims, as well as the potential claims of nonhuman nature, considered publicly rather than excluded as private preferences. Thus, Eckersley, along these very lines, states: 'The fact that the nonhuman world cannot participate in human speech should not be a barrier to their special interests always being considered and respected by those who can participate in the dialogue' (1990:761). The next challenge is to enable the consideration of those interests by a decision-making system and its participants. We will turn to this challenge shortly.

Eckersley also acknowledges difficulties with the use of rights to connect ecologism to democracy: '...the rights discourse becomes considerably strained (in all its dimensions) when we come to consider ecological entities. Although the general principle of autonomy can stretch to accommodate this new class of constituents, the rights discourse cannot' (Eckersley 1995:194). Hence, I argue that drawing on MacIntyre's ontological argument, based upon inter-relational interests, better serves a connection to democracy than does a deontological rights-based approach. This is because the ontological construction of an interdependent self can accommodate ontological claims concerning the status of non-human nature without becoming incoherent whilst a rights-based approach, containing strict parameters about enforceability and trade-offs, starts to become incoherent when the community of rights bearers is stretched (Eckersley 1995:193). Furthermore, by identifying shared interests with others and non-human nature, citizens are reflecting on their reasons to defend nature and act sustainably and thus to look for a motivation to care about nature. It is the shared interests that account for the motivation to act in a manner which acknowledges dependence upon the environment and thus to act in an environmentally sensitive manner. Therefore, I argue that ontological argument in ecologism is important.

Dobson's critique of Eckersley offers further insight into the difficulties of pursuing a rights-based approach. For rights to work, to be enforced, they must be specific. It is possible

of course to come up with a list of rights which are attractive from a green point of view, and in this instance, we are looking for rights which connect green concerns with democracy. Dobson observes that Eckersley appears to achieve this connection by specifying environmental rights, as we saw with Saward, as negative freedoms from environmental harms which might otherwise inhibit democratic procedures. Dobson points out that the problem with this approach to establishing an environmental right is that, as with the preconditions approach, it could be used to underpin any sort of political system: 'This is an important right no doubt, but it is not any more constitutive of democracy than it is of any other system of decision making. It is in other words, too general' (Dobson 1996:142).

Dobson offers a corrective response to Eckersley's autonomy argument based upon on a 'naturalistic' account of autonomy using a naturalistic construction of justice (what he terms the argument from 'principle'). On this account, as Eckersley has stated, non-human entities, though unable to communicate their interests, can be observed to have interests in common with humans. We should proceed on this basis in an account of justice, because, '...it would be self- contradictory for humans to recognise an attribute (autonomy) common across species but make it count only in their own case' (Dobson 1996:146). On this basis, we ought to treat an animal whose interests coincide with or resemble our own as we would a human with the same interests, according them the same representation in democratic procedures. Not to do so would constitute a form of human chauvinism toward the non-human world and future generations. The strength of this kind of argument from autonomy, for Dobson, is that its account 'crosses the species divide' (Dobson 1996:146). In the interests of preserving the nature of rights Dobson suggests that this is best done in a deliberative democratic context.

### ***Towards a deliberative democracy of the common good***

In his analysis, Dobson combines the argument from preconditions (the good), in which democracy ought to be concerned with environmentally benign ends, with the argument from

principle (autonomy) of equal respect for individual's interests in democratic and green political theory. Dobson contends that the two arguments from preconditions and principle be applied in tandem to move green political theory and democratic theory together (Dobson 1996:146). Firstly, adequate environmental conditions form the preconditions for democracy, and therefore democracy should be concerned about particular outcomes/ends as well as procedures. Secondly, both ecologism and democracy can be said to be concerned with ensuring autonomy, a feature that greens see as inhering in non-humans as well as humans.

The key point I would add here is that, based on the insights of this thesis, human autonomy is bound up with the autonomy of others. This is what we learn from MacIntyre's standpoint, in which community is a necessary condition of meaningful human autonomy, and this area, in itself, provides a link from an eco-communitarian position with a democratic position. For the self to participate in deliberation it is dependent upon its community and its environment. In this two-pronged approach, ecologism is democratised by democracy's procedures and democracy is 'sensitised' to green concerns by a review of the meaning of autonomy which greens present.

The key to this approach lies in deploying the synthesis with MacIntyre I have been developing. This combination of the notion of acknowledged dependence and a construction of the self or citizen as dependent rational animal moves deliberative theory towards a system of decision-making which is greener than at present. I contend, extrapolating from MacIntyre's argument and in agreement with Barry's argument to come, that theorists of democracy need to examine the type of individual prior to its arrival in the democratic decision-making process. The interests of the citizen who acknowledges that their dependence is tied up with their environment and their community and so is more widely self-interested. The eco-communitarian citizen deliberates at the local level about issues affecting the environment, acknowledging his or her interdependence with others and, as such, sees his or her own good, in significant part, as tied up with the good of others and with that of his or her wider environment. This ties autonomy to preconditions in such a way as to arrive at more widely

self-interested outcomes, that would include environmental concerns and therefore be greener, than at present. However, before moving on to articulate this synthesis with MacIntyre's ideas in greater detail, we need to consider why many greens have come to advocate deliberative democracy in the first place.

### ***Deliberative democracy***

There has been much work on deliberative democracy in green political theory (see Graham Smith 2003, Arias-Moldanado 2007, Backstrand, Khan, Kronsell and Lovbrand 2010, Baber and Bartlett 2005, Dryzek 2012, Eckersley 2004, for example). Here I wish to draw on the work primarily of Graham Smith, John Dryzek and Robyn Eckersley. I am aware by that by no means is this a full account of the debates within green political theory about deliberative democracy, but a review of these authors will provide some of the key resources that can be used in synthesising MacIntyre's approach with ecologism.

Smith is sensitive to the idea that the connection between democracy and green political theory is not straightforward (Smith 2003:71). His advocacy of deliberative democracy as a method of decision-making for greens emerges from a critique of the dominant mode in which existing liberal democratic institutions value and deal with environmental issues. Smith shows how often the value of the environment is reduced to its economic form as neoliberal democratic institutions use cost benefit analysis (CBA) as the default tool for decision-making. CBA is a powerful decision-making tool that aggregates people's preferences in accordance with some common currency – often monetary value. His concern is that: 'Efficiency and maximisation of output come to dominate policy decisions with detrimental effects on other desiderata such as equity' (Smith 2003:42). Though citizens are consulted on decisions affecting their environment, CBA reduces a plurality of values to one monetary value to compare the relative weight of preferences. This means that all value which is placed on nature is one of utility measured in monetary terms, in other words, a single instrumental

value. This entails that nature is processed as part of maximising capital accumulation, and ethical concerns about the status of nature can go missing.

However, within the green movement, as we have seen, there is a plurality of values attributed to nature, many of which are not simply instrumental and measured in monetary terms. For instance, some greens value the autonomous unfolding of nature for its own sake, just as we value our own unfolding as individuals and communities. To measure some values in terms of money is corrosive of the content and meaning of what is being valued. To value a person's life, whether someone who actually exists or not, based upon the monetary value of that life, would generally be considered inappropriate. The corollary in green thought is that in some instances it is similarly inappropriate to measure the worth of some animals, species and habitats in this way.

Further, CBA struggles with valuing distant environmental effects (such as trans-boundary air pollution). In fact, the more distant the impact the less the perceived cost, and so there is a tendency when using CBA to externalise environmental costs. The example Smith gives is the tendency to locate harmful environmental practices near to lower socio-economic groups and so-called third world nations (Smith 2003:44). Martin Hajer (1995:32) also offers a similar analysis of the way in which modern liberal democracies' decision-making procedures have disproportionately negative effects on those who tend to be already disenfranchised. It could also argue that with little representation in presently existing democratic institutions, costs are also externalised onto the non-human environment and future generations. Thus, CBA as a method of decision-making, that seeks cost and allocation efficiency, is corrosive of some of the core non-monetary values held by greens, and sometimes results in outcomes which are not acceptable to them.

Deliberative democracy can promote equality better than CBA and narrow liberal democratic forms of democracy by giving equal voice to those disenfranchised under current institutional arrangements. Smith argues for deliberative democracy as an alternative, or significant complement, to the use of CBA within representative government. He contends

that, ‘...efficiency needs to take its place alongside other values and possible decision rules, such as equity, or perhaps even the contested deep ecological “land ethic” or “biospherical egalitarianism”’ (Smith 2003:45), as it gives better representation to a plurality of valuations of the environment, including non-instrumental ones. Deliberative democracy is critical for greens because in principle it allows multiple interests to be expressed and because given preferences can be altered through the process of non-coerced and non-strategising debate. I shall say more on the design of deliberative debate in a moment. Deliberative democracy thus offers a path for greens to check the dominance of liberal atomistic ontology and narrow, aggregated self-interest, using CBA as a decision-making criterion, that appears destructive of the longer-term value and interests of and in nature.

Smith draws upon the works of Dryzek and Douglas Torgerson when presenting the case for a form of deliberative democracy. Dryzek’s arguments for deliberative democracy coincide with Torgerson’s when they agree that deliberative democratic designs are inclusive, incorporating the views of those directly affected by a particular issue rather than leaving the decision solely to more distant representatives (see Smith 2003:62, Torgerson 1999, Dryzek 1995). By bringing more stakeholders together deliberative structures can coordinate resolutions to issues. This is particularly the case where they involve a dispersed geographical area, such that problems are not simply outsourced onto the voiceless and underrepresented but shared amongst a broad constituency of affected individuals and communities. In effect, those who are voiceless are given voice at the point, and in the process, where decisions are made, bringing together actors who may question standard liberal democratic decision-making criteria which rely largely on CBA.

Dryzek also makes this point when he talks of deliberative designs bringing stakeholders together to cooperate in solving environmental issues. A particular model Dryzek offers, that would counter the instrumental treatment of nature by nation states, is that of the public sphere: ‘Public spheres are political bodies that do not exist as part of formal political authority, but rather in confrontation with that authority. Normally, they find their identity in



confrontation with the state (think, for example, of Solidarity in Poland in the early 1980s)' (1995:28). Such a public sphere contains within it a plurality of voices, with a plurality of views on nature, which may act to check and balance the largely instrumental view of nature, and its implications, found in most contemporary liberal cultures.

### ***The design of deliberative forums***

Deliberative democrats have had to defend their position against the criticism that their model of democracy does not lead to democratic outcomes or even processes. This is because deliberative democratic forums may be vulnerable to manipulation and agenda setting and that the idea of arriving at a consensus is anti-democratic in itself. What we also need to consider are the mechanisms that promote discussion between individual concerns on an equal basis. The issue here is that power differences in communities may distort the process of deliberation, making it impossible for all voices to be included equally (See Young 2000, Sanders 1997). By way of response to this, and for consideration within my approach, Kadlec and Friedman (2007) provide a revised conception of deliberative democracy. They argue that there are three critical components to consider in constructing deliberative institutions. Firstly, that a key element in checking power imbalances is for deliberative institutions or forums to be controlled and designed by either non-interested groups or to have them designed by a cross-section of interested parties (Kadlec and Friedman 2007:7). In theory, these steps reduce the potential for deliberative agendas to be determined by one interested party or another.

Secondly, Kadlec and Friedman argue that the design of deliberative forums is crucial. They argue that to avoid filling deliberative forums with individuals who most likely hold the social capital to do so, the most affluent, or well connected, the designers of deliberative forums should recruit widely. These designers can be either non-partisan designers who organise deliberation around a particular issue or they can be an array of individuals and groups with competing viewpoints. In order to avoid the framing of debate prior to

deliberation, designers should also make clear the ‘...range of available positions,’ (Kadlec and Freidman 2007:12) from the outset. This represents an alternative to the current domination of media and capital interests that skew public debate, which we have also seen MacIntyre to be very critical of (MacIntyre 1999:142).

Thirdly, deliberation requires facilitation by non-interested parties with an appreciation that the goal of deliberation is not to have to arrive at a consensus but rather for participants to appreciate the views of other participants, such that deliberation moves towards ‘confluence’, broadly a coming together, rather than convergence (Kadlec and Freidman 2007:15). Consensus is alleged to be anti-democratic as it implies one very fixed and durable view of the good, as opposed to one which is open to change and interpretation. In so doing, Kadlec and Freidman are arguing for deliberation as a promotion of ‘social intelligence’ in which problems in society are solved from the bottom up (2007:17). Participants in such deliberation should be viewed as activists who seek to promote the ideals of deliberation. Thus, deliberative politics is presented by, green, communitarian and deliberative theorists as a better alternative to traditional representative forms of democracy and authoritarianism.

Another issue with arriving at consensus is that it can cloud out possible alternatives. Using a study on Stockholm city council and urban planning Ulrika Gunnarson-Ostling (2014) argues that the trajectory of planning in a city known for its consideration of the environment has moved to one of consensus. Though the city’s model for planning includes much citizen participation, such that groups like the green party can have an impact, in recent years there has been a shift to focusing on outcomes measured rationally and framed increasingly in the context of international competitiveness. Such a shift has led to the dominance of an empirical discourse which has clouded out the idea that there are competing views on sustainability. This, in turn, has led to a dominance of a conception of sustainability as an expert matter that can only be solved with enough knowledge, whereas in the past different groups had been able to put forward their interpretations of sustainability and environmental protection. It was

this politicisation of the environment within the city that originally entailed a focus on Stockholm as a 'sustainable' city (Gunnarson-Ostling 2014).

Gunnarson-Ostling's suggested solution is to present competing conceptions of the future, in planning, to participants in deliberation about the environment. Like John Barry (2012) she advocates an agonistic conception of citizenship. Such a method of presenting and making choices between competing alternative visions of the future keeps open possible alternatives. Citizens can then see clearly that the choices they make have radically different consequences and that the point of deliberation on such environmental issues is not to move towards some fixed end point but to review and prioritize societal goals (Gunnarsson-Ostling 2014:112). She argues, using Stockholm as an example, that citizens can then see that buried underneath a 'superficial consensus' of 'sustainable development' it would become clear that some interpret this as 'business as usual,' believing that technology can 'solve all problems,' whilst others it would mean a radical change to 'living conditions' associated with 'reducing oil dependency' and 'sharing environmental resources justly' (Gunnarson-Ostling 2014: 111).

These theorists argue, as greens do, that deliberation can engage disaffected citizens at the grass roots in challenging the dominant voices of elites and, therefore, open communities to deliberating sustainable futures, beyond a narrow focus on continued economic growth, to taking seriously different conceptions of sustainability. MacIntyre also believes that deliberation should be facilitated at the grass roots level. Both parties can heed the notion that careful design, balanced leadership and an appreciation of others' points of view is vital to sustain deliberation, permit a debate as to the character of communities and to allow otherwise excluded interests have a voice in so doing. I will argue later that the virtues of acknowledged dependence exhibited by deliberative activists, to borrow the term, can enable parties to accept the need to also care for an environment and others on which they are dependent, but which cannot speak for themselves, in deliberation.

## ***Green goals and deliberation***

I will now return to argue why green outcomes are more likely to come from deliberative processes than contemporary liberal democracy. We would want to retain deliberative institutions as they may also have the very advantageous effect in practice of countering the tendency of neoliberal democracy to promote narrow self-interest. This is achieved, in part, by having stakeholders defend their views and interests to an interested audience, in public. Smith argues, citing the work of David Miller, that bringing stakeholders together has the effect of making actors account for their decisions in front of one another. He terms this a 'moralising effect' (Smith 2003:63) in which having to present arguments publicly means that actors have to come up with arguments beyond their own self-interest- or at least to show how that self-interest is compatible with the interests of others and of the community as a whole. It also entails the possibility of greens presenting and promoting their arguments based on their own particular views to, '...expose and to challenge the narrowly self-interested grounds of many environmentally degrading and unsustainable practices' (Smith 2003:63). This is an argument common to many green advocates of deliberative democracy. Here I wish to contribute to this argument from MacIntyre's communitarian point of view by suggesting that deliberative democrats consider also their conception of the citizen and promote his conception which acknowledges the citizen's dependence on others, as well as his or her environment, prior to initiating deliberation.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, from MacIntyre's perspective, these are dependencies that are constitutive of the self and as such should inform political debate and decision making. They are not the detachable preferences of neoliberalism.

Iris Marion Young (1996) suggests that deliberative design, to be truly representative, should facilitate engagement through a variety of communicative forms such as the narrative

---

<sup>3</sup> I am aware that in making this claim that others have done so particularly from the perspective of ecofeminism (see MacGregor 2006, Gabrielson and Parady 2010 for example) My offering in the context of a synthesis between communitarianism and ecologism complements theirs from a communitarian perspective in advocating the need for virtues and ontology in political theory and practice.

of the Lakota who express their morality through poetry, as seen in their protests against forestry in the Dakota hills. In this example, we can perhaps see the Lakota, as citizens/selves who acknowledge their dependence upon their environment. The key point is that the type of citizen engaged in deliberation is just as vital as the process of deliberation itself.

Finally, both Eckersley and Goodin argue that public deliberation is a process through which we may learn of our dependence on others and the environment and the process by which we learn to respect differently-situated others (including non-human others and future generations) (Eckersley 2000:120). Goodin argues that by listening to the views of others we come to incorporate and consider those views when forming our own. These views include the interests of those who cannot articulate their own interests, for instance, non-human nature. His advocacy of decentralised deliberative democracy is two-fold. First, as Smith argues above, the more stakeholders that are included the more likely greens are to be able to have an impact on decision-making by holding reasoners to account and offering their own views (Goodin 1996: 845). The second point is based around what Goodin terms 'anticipatory internalisation' (1996:846) whereby when defending choices publicly, as, in the case of a deliberative democratic context, a stakeholder will have to anticipate and internalise the concerns of others in defence of their choice.

Goodin advocates deliberative democracy for greens because participants in deliberative democracy can come to internalise and consider the interests of others, such that not only is there wider representation and influence but also a process of learning and a potential widening of self-interest. Goodin calls the overall process one of 'encapsulated interests' (Goodin 1996:835).

Deliberative democracy by its self is by no means a guarantee of green outcomes. Rather it is an improvement on neoliberal democracy that tends to exclude green concerns through its assumptions about the self, in that its interests are formed inter-subjectively and as constitutive attachments. Deliberative democracy allows green voices the chance to meaningfully challenge the narrow neoliberal view of the self and nature. Further, it offers the

possibility of representing non-human interests in the development of policy. Dryzek argues that: 'Even if the claims of nature can only enter the deliberative system through representations by human agents, it is far better that those representations are made than simply dismissed as social constructions' (Dryzek 2009: 13). In other words, deliberative democracy opens the door to the possibility of realising substantive green concerns rather than having them excluded out of hand as private conceptions of nature, as matters of personal belief, which should not bear on collective decisions. Smith's advice to greens is that they take heed of deliberative democracy not because it guarantees a green outcome but because it allows greens a broader voice, represented in the mainstream, against the dominance of cost benefit analysis (Smith 2003:101).

Manuel Arias-Moldanado argues persuasively that we must be cautious in our optimism about deliberative structures. Whilst they provide a greater opportunity for green voices or concerns to be heard, a step in the right direction, they are not in and of themselves a guarantee of green outcomes (Arias-Moldanado 2005:31). He argues that what is also required is a civic engagement with the 'normative ideal' of sustainability such that citizens entering deliberative forums may wish to advocate sustainable decisions. I argue that what citizens require are virtues of acknowledged dependence such that they take on board the interests of the environment on which they and others are dependent. I also note that, in arguing for a normative ideal of sustainability, Arias-Moldanado is also advocating a normative or ideological conception of sustainability which challenges dominant understandings of human environment relations- in the sense that eco-centric thinkers also challenge our understanding of our relationship to the environment. It is important, then, that we retain our ideological challenges in tandem with developing political systems more open to hearing them.

In terms of representation, it can be argued that the more points of access to the political system there are, the more opportunity there is for non-human interests to be represented. For Smith, opening up representative democracies to influence from deliberative democracy is the key to having the plurality and diversity of environmental values heard, at

least alongside dominant consumerist concerns. Contemporary liberal representative democracies should be opened up to deliberation using combinations of deliberative vehicles such as referenda, citizens forums and mediation, to reform decision-making processes and to 'ecologise democracy' (Smith 2003: 128).

## **Conclusion**

Smith concludes with the crucial point for the next chapter that, '...questions remain as how best to promote and cultivate empathy and enlarged mentality in representative assemblies' (Smith 2003:118). I also think that if this question is important for representative bodies then it is important for deliberative ones. By 'enlarged mentality' and 'empathy' Smith is alluding to the enlarged interests of eco-centric thinkers which we saw in chapter two, which see individuals taking into consideration their relationship to nature. In this chapter, I have pointed at how a communitarian approach may present a solution to this question and will move on to examining what MacIntyre's account in *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999) can offer to a green deliberative democracy. As we also saw above, Goodin has broached this issue to some degree with his discussion of the idea of encapsulated interests. If there is a problem with representatives in contemporary mainstream democracies not having a sensitive disposition towards non-human nature and the environment, then the question arises of how to ensure that citizens involved in alternative deliberative forums are any more likely to display such dispositions.

Thus, Smith's question requires further attention, and I suggest that it is an area of crucial concern if greens want to see more environmentally benign outcomes. Certainly, cultivating enlarged empathy ties into the notion of acknowledged dependence in that MacIntyre's notion of dependence sees individuals acknowledging their dependence on others and a rejection of the conception of the self as invulnerable and distinct from others. MacIntyre argues against the 'illusion of self-sufficiency' and in favour of a regard towards

others, '...whose extreme disablement is such that they can never be more than passive members of the community' such that the self thinks, '...I might have been that individual' (MacIntyre 1999:127-128). I will also show in the next chapter that MacIntyre argues in favour of proxies to speak on behalf of those who are unable to speak for themselves. These proxies need an understanding of the individual to be represented; they need, '...to assume the other's point of view' and to speak 'truthfully' for them in representing their interests in the face of cross examination from others involved in deliberation (MacIntyre 1999:127-128). In referring to proxies as taking on board the interests of those they represent MacIntyre also addresses the Arentian notion of 'enlarged mentality' which Smith refers to. Having shown how ecologism and deliberative democracy may accommodate each other I now turn to these issues in discussing how deliberative democracy may accommodate selves who exhibit such an enlarged mentality.



## Chapter 6

### Deliberation and Acknowledged Dependence

#### *Introduction*

Following on from the previous chapter I will argue that MacIntyre's conception of the self as dependent by nature and the virtues of acknowledged dependence can help to link deliberative democratic processes with the goals of ecogism. This conception is one in which citizens acknowledge their dependence on others and their environment. In effect, citizens arrive at deliberation acknowledging their interdependence on one another and their environments. In this way, an alternative to the neoliberal ontology of rational self-interest that shapes outcomes within modern liberal democracies is developed. Creating and enabling deliberative forums is not, on its own, enough, as long as these forums are 'peopled' by citizens who bring with them the assumptions of neoliberalism. Under these conditions, debates – even deliberative ones – are likely to be dominated by self-interest and short-termism. So, we must also pay attention to the nature of citizens participating in deliberation. What I add to this advocacy of deliberative democracy and citizenship is MacIntyre's notion of the virtues of acknowledged dependence. Key amongst which is the notion of just generosity in exercising our duties to those on whom we have been, or may be, dependent or those who may be dependent on us.

In this chapter, I will start by showing how John Barry (2012) has addressed the question of what is required for democracy to become more amenable to the goals of green political and social thought. In doing so he develops an agonistic conception of green citizenship and his work provides a bridge to the synthesis between green political thought and MacIntyre's that I am proposing. Barry argues for a conception of citizenship in line with the civic republican tradition- green civic republicanism. In this chapter, I will argue that the broad contours of a green citizenship can also be found in Alasdair MacIntyre's notion of the virtues

of acknowledged dependence and his advocacy of political and social institutions which foster citizens who acknowledge dependence upon others in their community; including that of the wider ecological community. In so doing I am supplementing Barry's argument with a focus on the virtues of acknowledged dependence. Finally, I will also explore the potential of MacIntyre's idea of proxies as agents who advocate concern for nature.

### ***Citizenship and deliberation***

As with deliberation, there is a large literature on citizenship and green political thought produced since the 1990s. MacGregor (2016) classifies work on green citizenship that has developed over the last thirty years into three strands. Firstly, are the 'minimalist' liberal rights-based approaches that focus on procedural and substantive rights, such as access to information or to a healthy environment. Secondly, is the civic republican approach that retains the liberal commitment to democratic rights but which places emphasis on duties and 'pro-environmental behaviour'. And thirdly, are the 'post-cosmopolitan positions' that stress global non-reciprocal responsibilities (See MacGregor 2016 111-119). I situate my own approach to citizenship within the latter two positions. In terms of my relationship to civic republican citizenship, I have been, and will, argue for a citizenship that is framed by the virtues of acknowledged dependence and which stresses an active commitment to politics and pro-environmental behaviour. In terms of the post-cosmopolitan position, as we will see, MacIntyre's virtues of acknowledged dependence are in large part about relationships in which there is no direct reciprocity, such as care for the young or the elderly, relationships which should be sustained in order for individuals and communities to flourish. Such logic can be applied to our shared environments. As such, there is overlap between the dependent rational individual and an approach that stresses the need to acknowledge our ecological duties even when they are not reciprocal.

MacGregor also notes that ecological citizenship should be seen as, ‘...a position from which to *resist* neoliberalism and its ability to present individual choice and the pursuit of self-interest as natural and inevitable’ (2016:128). It is in this form that I wish to present a citizenship informed by an acknowledgement of dependence. In the sense that individuals who acknowledge their dependence on others and with their environment challenge the notion of narrow self-interest at the heart of neoliberalism. Further, MacGregor also states that, ‘This requires both an opening up of political space that has been shut down by the rhetoric of crisis and ‘existential threats’ and a return to genuine collectivism and publicity (public spiritedness)’ (2016:128). Hence, I will argue that there is a need to consider both the type of self or citizen involved in public deliberation about the character of our communities alongside the form of that deliberation in order to open up debate about different ways of relating to nature.

Bronwyn Hayward (1995) notes the requirement for democratic green theorists to address the issue of citizenship if democracy is to be ‘greened’. Her observations are based on a case study of participatory democracy and environmental issues in New Zealand. Her study illustrates the way in which neoliberal democracies privilege the participation of individuals with narrowly self-interested values, focused largely on capital, and objectives:

In the past, citizens who stood to make tangible financial gain from a decision were advantaged in deliberation because they had strong motivation to participate. In contrast citizens concerned about less tangible issues (such as scenic beauty) often found it difficult to sustain active involvement in the sometimes costly and time consuming process of public deliberation (Hayward 1995:233).

She goes on to note that in New Zealand the citizens who are most influentially placed when it comes to making decisions which affect the environment are property owners. These property-owning citizens see themselves in the first instance as utility maximisers rather than

as individuals embedded within wider mixed communities of interdependence. It is clear from her findings that the individuals entering deliberation were already shaped in their preferences. What is required are strongly motivated people who are able to acknowledge their dependence to represent ecological concerns in deliberation.

John Barry is also constructively critical of contemporary liberal democratic structures that privilege a particular materialist liberal world view, in which affluence and ownership of property are the determining interests. In contrast, he argues that, ‘...the point about deliberative democratic institutions is that they can bring out the inter-subjective character of environmental values, and articulate publicly the different forms of human valuing and bring them to bear in the making of social-environmental decisions’ (Barry 1999:219). Thus, Barry argues that a deliberative form of democracy can integrate green knowledge and values into decision making.

In order to maximise the possibility that the outcomes of such deliberative institutions are green, Barry also focuses on the need for citizens who are committed to protecting the interests of future generations and the environments on which they are dependent. These ‘green citizens’ would give voice to interests presently excluded from liberal democracy (Barry 1999:223). In his 2012 work, he takes his argument in favour of green citizenship further to argue for an agonistic conception of citizenship in which citizens argue from their various standpoints and thus question, ‘...risky economic growth policies’ (2012:161, 271). This is one of the points I would argue: that citizens who acknowledge dependence are more likely to consider and have to justify their impact on the environment within deliberative procedures – outcomes may then be more forward thinking, less short-termist, and embody wider interests than the narrow, alienated, preferences that are more closely associated with neoliberal individualist ontologies. I hope to show that MacIntyre’s work provides us with conceptual material to argue for this, and John Barry’s work provides us with a bridge to a fruitful communitarian synthesis in the later part of this chapter.

Barry argues that though greens talk of deliberative democracy there is always a significant element of representation of interests entailed - of both future humans and non-humans (and we have seen this with Smith 2003, Goodin 1996 and Eckersley 2004). In representing those interests, decisions affecting them have to be explained and justified because they can amount to a side constraint on the outcomes of deliberation. I shall show later that MacIntyre is also concerned with the issue of representation in deliberation and develops the notion of proxies to represent the interests of the dependent who cannot speak for themselves. Barry also explores the notion of something like the precautionary principle as a check on short-term and narrowly anthropocentric decisions: 'in situations of uncertainty the onus of proof is on the risk creators...The point is that democratic environmental decision-making, where uncertainty and ecological vulnerability are high, calls for prudence and self-limitation' (Barry 1999:225).

Barry reiterates the point we have observed on several occasions: that more democracy alone does not entail sustainable outcomes. Deliberative democracies can give voice to presently excluded environmental considerations; they can then help others in the deliberative process regulate their decisions along more sustainable lines. But beyond ensuring better representation than presently existing democratic institutions, deliberative institutions do not necessarily entail green outcomes. Therefore, he suggests that the complement to deliberative democracy is the virtue of green citizenship: 'In practice this virtue of responsible green citizenship is a willingness to accommodate the interests of others within an expanded conception of the "ecological common good", a common good in which one's own good is located' (1999:232). Such that green citizenship is about being attentive to the interests of others including the environment and non-human entities.

Thus, for Barry, underpinning deliberative democratic structures should be citizens committed to the good of considering a wide range of interests. Such a method is one close to the civic republicanism of some communitarians in which active citizenship plays a part in maintaining the spirit and institutions of democratic society. In fact, in his 2012 book *The*

*Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability* (2012), Barry draws upon just such a conception of civic republican politics which I shall turn to in a moment.

I also argue that, beyond the virtues usually attributed to participation in deliberative democracy, we need to pay heed to the selves that determine the substance of the outcomes of deliberation. These selves are not found within the deliberative process itself but derive from the nature of the individuals who participate in the process. If participants in deliberation are to represent the interests of others, including non-human entities and the environment, they should be able to acknowledge their dependence within deliberation. This will be a dependence that people learn in their daily lives and their experience of their environment and which can also be carried into deliberative forums with them. In this respect, the key virtues I would add are MacIntyre's virtues of acknowledged dependence in which individuals engaging in deliberation have internalised their dependence on each other and on their wider environments as well as the interests of those who are dependent upon them. Once again, and in agreement with Barry, this is because although deliberation increases the chance of a green voice being heard, this in itself is no guarantee of greener outcomes. Green deliberative theorists must pay just as much attention to the notion of the good as to the right procedures of deliberation.

In the spirit of contemporary democracy, and as I mentioned in chapter 1, Barry keeps the notion of the good broad and offers a range of accompanying virtues: acceptance of the interests of others, a motivation to seek compatible solutions and a willingness to pursue open debate and compromise. Such virtues underpin the operation of green deliberative democracy itself— and my contribution in this chapter, and in the context of a synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's thought, is to add the virtues of acknowledged dependence. These virtues lend themselves to being green in that a wider field of interests is to be considered than that of the narrow material self-interest implied by neoliberal articulations of democracy which crowd out the notion of the good beyond one's own self-interest. In sum, what greens should also continue to recognise is that democracy – and the practice of politics more

generally – is importantly about the nature of its citizens as well as its institutions. As Barry notes, we need '*better*' democracy in which citizens, 'share responsibility for environmental protection'. This '*better* democracy' is to come from 'democratically constructing a more ecologically rational culture' (1999:242 emphasis in original). Thus, green deliberative democracy and citizens who are more sensitive to ecological concerns are dependent upon each other.

For Barry, the green citizen is prepared to think about interests other than her/his own in order to represent non-human nature and future generations. Barry (2012) has since expanded on this view to argue in favour of a civic republican type politics in which he takes inspiration from the transition town movement. This is a movement that poses creative solutions to problems such as peak oil, climate change and habitat destruction. He proposes an outline of a green republican state in which citizens start by acknowledging their vulnerability and develop resilience as a response; rather than deny their vulnerability and ignore environmental degradation. Such acknowledgement could be developed through festivals in which gratitude is expressed, people reconnect with their dependencies, rather than deny them, and there is a pause in typical economic activity (Barry 2012: 108-112). He sees the transition town movement as a pioneer of such a politics and practice of resilience through creative responses to unsustainable practices in which communities are formed to discuss and acknowledge issues such as peak oil in the context of generating a response.

Furthermore, Barry argues that a republican view shares the intergenerational concern which greens have in that both are aware of their contingent relationship with nature and wish to preserve it for the future (Barry 2012:219). With regard to safeguarding the environment from the economy as it presently exists Barry invokes the concept of usufruct, utilizing the environment but ensuring it is not adversely damaged, to bridge the gap between republicanism that respects private property and an ecologism which may view private property as ecologically destructive (Barry 2012:243). Green civic republicanism also entails that corporations may be limited by ecological bottom lines (Barry 2012:250) and subject to

democratization perhaps through the formation of worker-owned corporations. For Barry, green republicanism accepts pluralism, emphasises the importance of active citizens and advocates deliberation (Barry 2012:270). In agreement with Dryzek and Niemeyer (2010), Barry suggests that citizens should be engaged through public enquires and other deliberative innovations (Barry 2012:271).

He argues for an agonistic type of green politics in which green citizens resist unsustainable practice coming up with creative solutions whilst exhibiting hope that the future is not an environmental dystopia but rather that they can pass on their republic to future generations in a better environmental shape than it was (Barry 2012:271). I would move to incorporate such a view into this synthesis. I agree with Barry that citizens who acknowledge their interdependencies should interfere with the economy (Barry 2012:242) to ground it, reduce the material through put of individuals and organizations, and limit environmental harm. I agree in the sense that the market, corporations and business, should be regulated and held to account by citizens who are concerned about the environment, and those with whom they are interdependent, and not just focus on economic growth. Local sites of deliberative practice represent the sites at which such interference can start, with those who embody the virtues of acknowledged dependence holding to account institutions and organizations that threaten to damage that with which they are interdependent. I shall explore this view of political economy further in the following chapter.

The argument in this thesis supports that of Barry, by advocating the virtues of acknowledged dependence and adding them to the list of green citizenly virtues that Barry and others have developed. By adding the acknowledgement of dependence the self participating in deliberation about the environment is one who reflects on their dependencies and acknowledges them in decision making. The self who exhibits acknowledged dependence appreciates that their autonomy is contingent on the ability of others and, I would add, their environment in supporting them. In this sense autonomy is the ability of a self to participate in deliberative politics, representing their own interests and the interests of those with whom



they are interdependent. In so doing, they act in such a way as to acknowledge that they are also dependent upon the flourishing of others. This is a recognition that autonomy is not a narrow individualism or Aristotelian *megalopsychos* of the individual who is robustly independent of the networks of their community (MacIntyre 1999:127). Rather autonomy is sustained through networks of giving and receiving which themselves require sustaining and nurturing. In this respect, MacIntyre advocates the virtue of *misericordia* a disposition of pity towards others in need as a subset of acknowledged dependence (1999:124).

Centrally to the virtues, MacIntyre argues that the type of action which should characterize the acknowledgement of dependence is *just generosity*. This is an uncalculated form of compassion whereby the self acknowledges that other selves to whom they owe a debt cannot give directly back to them, but they still give to them because they themselves have benefited from the giving of others (MacIntyre 1999:126).

MacIntyre notes that the virtues attendant on describing the kind of overlapping justice and generosity required in acknowledging our dependence are tricky to pin down in conventional understandings. MacIntyre uses the Lakota expression *wancantognaka* that describes the responsibilities which individuals have to, ‘...immediate family, extended family and tribe...’ and who express this through ‘uncalculated giving’ at ceremonial times (1999:120). On this account justice and generosity overlap, as to fail in displaying this virtue is, ‘...to fail in respect of justice; because what I owe is uncalculated giving, to fail to exhibit it is also to fail in respect of generosity’ (1999:121). Broadly speaking MacIntyre settles on a virtue of just generosity in naming the disposition of character that befits someone acknowledging their dependence, but it also includes other virtues such as *Misericordia* or pity as described above and, as we shall see in the final section, truthfulness (1999: 119-128, 151).

I argue that this construction can certainly include acknowledging our dependence on our environment, and entities that cannot speak for themselves, and giving back to the environment from which we take. This is obviously a constraint on neoliberal notions of autonomy in which the self is free of attachments or obligations but, at the same time, it is an

acknowledgement that our being able to function as independent reasoners is dependent on others and our environment. Without acknowledging this we run the risk of undermining our future autonomy and that of others.

The next part of the chapter will explain how individuals can come to acknowledge their dependence in deliberation. In this context, I offer the notion that the representation of environmental interests within deliberation is determined, to some degree, by the locus of the agents involved in the deliberation itself, the level at which deliberation occurs, and the proximity of participants to the issues at hand. This offers a complementary perspective on green institutional design through a synthesis with MacIntyre's ideas. Barry's argument, above, has provided a significant inroad into this coming construction. According to Barry, a green democracy is one in which the 'relevant demos' is that comprising those affected (Barry 1999:214). The sustainable society depends on 'tapping into existing sources of shared identity' and 'creating a greater sense of common purpose' (Barry 1999:214). For him, these represent challenges made by greens to contemporary liberal democracy.

What I add to this advocacy of deliberative democracy and citizenship is the notion of the virtues of acknowledged dependence from an eco-communitarian perspective. MacIntyre is also aware of the challenge of developing inclusive deliberative practices which enable citizens to express their acknowledgement of dependence. MacIntyre also argues in favour of a deliberative form of politics to cultivate the virtues of acknowledged dependence. The aim of this next section is to show how MacIntyre's conception of the self as dependent rational animal and the virtues of acknowledged dependence can inform a green deliberative politics.

## ***MacIntyre, deliberative politics and the virtues of acknowledged dependence***

As pointed out earlier, communitarians such as MacIntyre have also faced the issue of resolving the tension between the right and the good or procedure versus outcome. In disputing deontological liberalism's priority of the right over the good, communitarians have faced the criticism that the implication of their philosophy would be a return to radically conservative societies governed by dogmatic notions of the good and hostile to diversity. In other words, it has been countered that a communitarian politics could be and has in reality been, radically particularist, parochial, and authoritarian (see Dalacoura 2002, Kymlicka 2002:227 for example).

Many communitarians would reject this criticism. For example, the main point that MacIntyre seeks to address in *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999) is what political and social structures can best enable individuals in pursuit of both their individual *and* common goods: 'What are the types of political and social society that can embody those relationships of giving and receiving through which our individual and common good can be achieved?' (MacIntyre 1999:129). In doing so MacIntyre is rejecting the accusation that individuals are radically determined by, and in thrall to, their community, by offering a construction which seeks to enable the pursuit of both individual and communal goods. In this case, neither the individual nor the community through which the individual comes to be autonomous is prior; rather they are in a mutually constitutive relationship with one another.

MacIntyre and greens are both concerned to point out a link between their theories and democracy. MacIntyre's first criterion for political structures is that they accommodate people as individuals, in a particular community, who are coming together to make decisions about matters which affect them, and on which they need a broad consensus. As a consequence:

... there will have to be institutionalized forms of deliberation to which all those members of the community who have proposals, objections and arguments to contribute have access. And the procedures of decision-making will have to be generally acceptable, so that both deliberation and decisions are recognizable as the work of the whole (MacIntyre 1999:129).

Thus, MacIntyre asserts that deliberation and decision making in his conception of political institutions ought to be accessible to those in the community who are affected by the decisions taken. MacIntyre's solution to this is to down size the level at which deliberation occurs to that of the local community. All independent practical reasoners must be able to express their views on matters about which the community can come to agreement through shared deliberation. In other words, substantive issues require open deliberation to make their outcome acceptable to the community of individuals they affect. In order for so many to access deliberation and acknowledge their interdependencies, this process has to occur at the local level on MacIntyre's understanding. It is important to remember that MacIntyre's individuals are interconnected through shared practices and dependence rather than being the narrowly self-interested individuals of neoliberalism. We are now familiar with this line of argument in favour of democracy from the point of view of ecologism, in that green outcomes and policy are most likely to be more durable if they are arrived at through the consent and internalisation afforded by shared democratic deliberation (see Dobson 1990, Smith 2003). We shall see that MacIntyre offers a similar view of the self, learning through its interactions in shared deliberation with others, such that the goods of the self become, in part, the goods of the community and vice versa.

Interestingly, MacIntyre argues that political structures should afford voice to both independent practical reasoners *and* to those whose reasoning is impaired. He goes on to say that the only way in which these individuals can be given voice is through formal recognition of proxies in political deliberation (MacIntyre 1999:130). It is not, I believe, a stretch here to see

non-human interests affected by human decisions as being worthy of advocacy by proxies in a similar way. We have already seen Eckersley (1996, 2004) argue for environmental defenders and Dryzek (1995, 2009) argue for lobbyists in civil society to take on green causes and represent them in public discussion. In the case of this communitarian conception, the argument can be rooted in the idea of dependence elucidated previously as giving cause for non-human nature's interests to be represented by human proxies in collective deliberation. In agreement with MacIntyre, who is attempting to formulate a political system which takes for granted the notion that dependency is not just predicable of the young, elderly or disabled (MacIntyre 1999:130) but of everyone in society in general, this conception would extend the idea of the community to non-human environments and dependents as well. Thus, a virtue-ethical approach of reciprocal acknowledged dependence between networks of people and the non-human world would mirror that of MacIntyre's. This case was stated in the previous chapter, but we can now go further to see what is required in terms of the political structures of such a society, for we are still left with the question of how we effectively and meaningfully recognise environmental concerns and interests in deliberation. I shall now turn to address these points.

MacIntyre offers a speculative yet instructive account of what is the nature of an ideal political community, in which just generosity (uncalculated giving and receiving) and thus acknowledged dependence are properly realized, through a rejection of two sorts of community: the family and the nation state. This is important to us because his notion of community has a strong bearing upon the level at which political decision-making takes place and at which the representation and deliberation of interests occur. MacIntyre suggests that neither the modern state nor the family are forms of 'association' in which the relationships of acknowledged dependence can be sustained by themselves because they do not share a common good 'presupposed' by those relationships (1999:131). In agreement with the green and eco-centric political theorists we have discussed, MacIntyre is critical of present 'nation-

state democracy' as being too centralised in terms of power and furthermore of having been co-opted by the interests of capital and profit maximisation to the exclusion of other interests:

Modern nation states are governed through a series of compromises between a range of more or less conflicting economic and social interests...What determines both bargaining power and such ability is in key part money, money used to provide the resources to sustain political power: electrical resources, media resources, relationships to corporations... (MacIntyre 1999:131).

The extent of the intrusion of capital into modern democracy distorts decision-making such that the distribution of goods in society is compromised and does not reflect the discursive ideal of decisions reached through common deliberation. Parallels can be drawn between this argument and Graham Smith's outlined in the previous chapter (2003:42), where he argues that cost-benefit analyses dominate decision-making at the level of the state such that other non-monetised values are excluded. In effect, both theorists wish to break the hegemony of money in political decision-making through the use of forms of deliberative democracy. We have seen in previous chapters that MacIntyre sees the absolute dominance of capital in public life as corrosive of the virtues of acknowledged dependence required to sustain individuals and their communities (see, for example, MacIntyre 1999:117). Market relations can only be sustained by being embedded in local non-market relationships if they are to contribute to human flourishing. So, the second point about the state and its nurturing of individuals is that it is too distant from these localised face-to-face relationships.

This is a feature of the sheer size and diversity of modern democratic states. MacIntyre suggests that the state is a necessary feature with which the communities of acknowledged dependence will have to interact, and it will continue to be so as it supplies goods of security such as defence. However, it cannot effectively embody those relationships of community of

uncalculated giving and receiving that are established through face-to-face interaction. In effect, the level at which individuals meet is too far removed from individual's everyday practices. MacIntyre likens the state to a 'giant utility company' (MacIntyre 1999:132) in respect of which individuals weigh up the costs of entanglement. The state exists to provide and manage welfare and defence paid for by taxation. As such, citizens, by MacIntyre's account, tend to see themselves more as consumers of goods provided by this distant state rather than active participants in maintaining the community. This then entails that participation in activities such as deliberation is seen as additional costly exercises to be weighed up before engaging in.

MacIntyre goes further in suggesting that communitarians have been wrong to assert that the state should embody a constitutive community because such a claim runs the risk of invoking *volkish* notions of race and sinister imagined communities. Modern societies are simply too heterogeneous and too big to pursue any one conception of the good that properly accommodates the virtues of acknowledged dependence such as just generosity. Nor is the family the proper site of the pursuit of common goods and virtuous practices, as the family is dependent on other institutions and individuals for support - families flourish in so far as their communities flourish. This is not to say that they are not key constituents of communities because they embody and sustain relationships of acknowledged dependence within them, but that in doing so they are not self-sufficient.

So, what is the locus of practice between state and family at which a common good can be understood and pursued and at which the relationships of dependence are properly acknowledged? MacIntyre seems to suggest that this is the level of the local community (in its broadest sense understood as the human and non-human community) as, 'The relatively small scale character of the local community and the face-to-face encounters and conversations of the local community are necessary for the shared achievement of the common goods of deliberation needed to sustain the networks of giving and receiving' (MacIntyre 1999:142). In this sense, it is engagement with concrete others that generates and sustains acknowledged

dependence and just generosity. It is face-to-face interactions in the community and the sharing of certain fates that enables shared understandings and a pursuit of the good. Empathy is something that is far more apparent when we interact directly with environment, just as it is when we interact directly with other people. As such the politics of deliberation is best conducted close to these relationships of giving and receiving, and those going into deliberation ought to acknowledge their dependence on one another. Acknowledged dependence needs to be present for relationships of giving and receiving to operate and flourish properly. MacIntyre is saying more than that individuals need to be open to persuasion and compromise in deliberation. Specifically, those involved in deliberation need to be aware of, and respect their interdependence and their dependence on others who cannot represent themselves, and that this is something which is learned through the practices of the local community.

Our acknowledged dependence is learnt through our experience of others and our environment. Devolved deliberative structures pose an opportunity for selves to represent their own experience of dependence but only if those structures are placed close to the level of practice and the issues to be deliberated. Having deliberation at a national scale is too far removed from the face to face experience where dependence is learnt. Furthermore, virtues like just generosity and truthfulness will have to be learnt both in deliberation, realizing others are similarly dependent, and out of deliberation realizing that we are interdependent with others who cannot speak for themselves. *Acknowledged dependence is, or needs to be, learnt prior to entering formal deliberation in the daily interactions of the community.* This is a vital point for greening deliberative democracy. The likelihood of generating greener outcomes from deliberation is increased if those engaging in deliberation possess the virtues of acknowledged dependence in deliberation and take it with them into deliberation about the character of their society.

Does MacIntyre offer any examples of the kind of community he envisages, in which acknowledged dependence is evident? He suggests that researchers look to historical



examples of fishing communities in New England, Mayan farming cooperatives and Welsh mining towns with their shared practices to examine when these communities were at their best and worst (1999:143).

MacIntyre contends that it is at this level, where individuals are engaged in shared endeavours and face-to-face encounters, that we can find examples of the outcome of the exercise of the virtues of acknowledged dependence. One example he gives is the way in which people help each other, without weighing up the costs and benefits, in mining disasters that hit mining communities. As such the level of community at which deliberation takes place is key. I do not think that MacIntyre is suggesting that communities do not extend beyond the local but that this is the scale at which social practices and decisions should be deliberated, as this is where relationships of giving and receiving and acknowledged dependence primarily exist. Nor does it imply that wider and broader commitments are not possible. What it does say is that the foundations for these commitments are laid at the local level. This point resonates with Eckersley's argument that invokes the *Wind in the Willow* story of Ratty's belonging to and affection for the river bank:

Without some knowledge of, or familiarity with, particular persons or particular animals or plants, it is hard to understand how one might be moved to defend the interests of people in general or species in general (Eckersley 2006:104 emphasis in original).

Apart from exceptional circumstances of national need, such as war, these are affinities, habits and practices that the state generally fails to engender, reliant as it is upon the mass media directed by capital to mobilise commitment. MacIntyre is clearly critical of the modern nation state with regard to its inadequacies in effectively sustaining, in a genuine fashion, the relationships of just generosity and acknowledged dependence. He regards its claims to do so as somewhat empty: 'The modern state...behaves part of the time towards those subjected to

it as if it were no more than a giant, monopolistic utility company and part of the time as if it were the sacred guardian of all that is most to be valued. In the one capacity it requires us to fill in the appropriate forms in triplicate. In the other, it periodically demands that we die for it' (MacIntyre 1998: 227).

Conducting deliberation that leads to more sustainable outcomes ought to be done, in significant part, at the level at which individuals can understand and empathise with others. In this way, any changes in policy are the result of discussion and understanding rather than dictates from a distant decision-making body. Not only does the level of deliberation and citizen involvement address the motivational aspects of the 'going green' dilemma, that activities such as recycling can be seen as burdensome impositions, but it also addresses the democratic imperative to give individuals back ownership over decisions which affect them and their communities. In this way, the distribution of goods reflects the results of widespread deliberation of individuals coming toward an understanding about a sustainable relationship with the environment. This echoes MacIntyre's requirement for the practice of the virtues of acknowledged dependence; that deliberation is key to agreement on how the burden of responsibilities to dependent others can be shared throughout a community:

Where the virtues of acknowledged dependence are practiced, there will have to be a common mind as to how responsibilities for and to dependent others are allocated and what standards of success and failure are appropriate.... such a common mind will have to emerge from shared deliberation, so that social agreement on responsibilities will not only be, but seen to be rationally justified (MacIntyre 1999:133).

Furthermore, conducting deliberation at a face-to-face level, close to the issues at hand, may remove some of the barriers created by vested interests which are able to command capital and operate media to mobilise politics to advance their own interests above others. Green

parties and interest groups that lack capital may then find it easier to have their arguments heard and, as suggested by MacIntyre above, concurred with. I will return to build upon MacIntyre's suggestions for a politics of acknowledged dependence, and to consider his critical positioning with regard to the state, in the following chapter. However, before I do so I will consider one final area in which MacIntyre's thought can contribute to furthering green concerns within debating chambers. That is the notion of proxies to represent the interests of dependent others.

### ***Representation in deliberation***

MacIntyre's construction of proxies as representatives of those who are unable to represent themselves in deliberation, but whose interests count in informing the interests of the community, serves as a complementary mechanism to decentralising political deliberation and decision-making. They are important for the synthesis because they are MacIntyre's way of representing the interests, as truthfully as they can, of those on whom they are, and have been dependent, and those who are dependent on them but cannot speak for themselves. From an eco-communitarian point of view the embedded self is also dependent upon nature and so we need a guide as to how to represent nature within deliberation. At the level of practical reasoning, the community needs to take into consideration, then, the needs of those who are unable to participate in deliberation. In MacIntyre's work, this is achieved by establishing proxies for those unable to represent themselves in deliberation i.e. the young, the elderly and the disabled (MacIntyre 1999:131). For the eco-centric self, their dependence also includes non-human nature.

To explain how proxies operate in theory we need to return to MacIntyre's virtues of acknowledged dependence. The idea is that individuals or groups represent environmental concerns in deliberation. These proxies for nature, bearing in mind debate is being conducted at a local level, are the citizens themselves. They have to account to each other in deliberation

for their views on the value of nature. Their view of nature as something on which they are dependent has to be made clear to all during deliberation. The key here is that as nature is something on which we, and others, are dependent environmental concerns should be represented in deliberation. In such a way this is a call for the concept of nature to be politicized and questioned so that citizens realize when they deliberate that the choices they make impact upon the environment and can lead to radically different futures.

We have seen a partial picture of how this could be realised in Gunnarson-Ostling's account of how in 1995 Stockholm adopted a progressive planning model in which stakeholders were consulted widely in an environmental political action plan. The model was inspired by the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the program, as such, was also global in its outlook promoting the acknowledgement that, '...life in Stockholm was dependent on resources around the world' (Gunnarson-Ostling 2014). Two things stand out here: one is that a broad spectrum of affected stakeholders were consulted, not explicitly as such, but as proxies representing differing environmental interests, and two, that debate was explicitly framed in the sense of dependence on the environment.

In order to represent others, MacIntyre states that an important part of acknowledging dependence is the virtue of truthfulness (MacIntyre 1999: 159).<sup>1</sup> This virtue is a constituent part of acknowledged dependence and it is vital to observe truthfulness in deliberation, particularly when one is representing the interests of others. MacIntyre defines truthfulness through its opposites: firstly, not preventing others from learning what they need to learn, second, not concealing our relations with others, and finally, when it comes to deliberation, avoiding irony. MacIntyre characterises irony as a pretence of detachment from

---

<sup>1</sup> See also Calder's 2009 article in which he defends the notion of proxies from the charge of paternalism. He cites precisely MacIntyre's use of virtues, such as truthfulness, as attributes of character for proxies. In doing so he argues that in exhibiting these virtues proxies can speak for others in deliberation in a way which acknowledges our mutually shared vulnerability, including those of the proxy themselves. Thus, proxies need not be paternalistic but rather speak more humbly to shared concerns in exhibiting virtues such as truthfulness. (See Calder 2009:131). I agree with this view of proxies and the virtue of truthfulness as I am setting out here.

the shared language of the community, a cold detachment from our shared interests to the degree that one is in a permanently critical rather than reflective state (MacIntyre 1999:152).

Truthfulness is vital for proxies and those involved in deliberation so that prejudices can be revealed and genuinely taken into account when taking decisions. The key concern here is that even when independent practical reasoners are able to give a genuine account of their own interests, on reflection, reason is potentially distorted because of the individual nature of our interests. This must be guarded against, says MacIntyre as, 'All attention is selective, but, if my attention is purposefully and wilfully selective, so that it leads me to ignore considerations that it is important for me to entertain, my practical reasoning may be deprived of relevant premises' (MacIntyre 1999:148). Factors that may be ignored can range far and wide, and many are green concerns about longer term issues which current short-termist thinking tends to ignore or obscure.

MacIntyre goes further on the issue of disguising agendas: '...when I utter what I and others take to be my reasons for acting, that utterance may, in fact, be functioning so as to disguise some hope or fear that is motivating my action' (MacIntyre 1999:148). For MacIntyre deliberative structures, such as those discussed in the previous chapter, should function to reveal their participants' prejudices, particularly where the issue of representing other interests is concerned. This is in line with the green view of deliberative democracy in which participants are forced to account for their views and in so doing reflect upon the implication of their views for the environment.

I would argue that deliberation must be open to proxies representing the entities and environments within which communities are situated. Particularly if we concede that, ontologically, there is a degree of interdependence between ourselves and others. Not to do so would be narrowly anthropocentric and would deprive the community of shared and open deliberation that seeks to ensure the flourishing of independent reasoners and their communities. Though, even in saying this, we can see that MacIntyre's construction has brought us to a point where communities are empowered in shaping and deliberating the

common good. This is such a way that their orientation and general attitude toward non-human nature may be altered as a matter of common interest rather than private preference.

So, a synthesis between MacIntyre's thought and ecologism suggests a need for deliberation, decentralisation, norms of acknowledged dependence (such as truthfulness in deliberation), and a conception of citizens who acknowledge their dependence and who display the virtue of just generosity and a commitment to shared deliberation. MacIntyre's argument in *Dependent Rational Animals* is that a decentralising of political deliberation is required in order to nurture the virtues of acknowledged dependence and to allow individuals to pursue their own good. He argues that deliberation about the nature of the good at a local level of face-to-face communities is a necessary feature of his type of communitarian politics. If we extend the notion of dependence to include the non-human natural world, then a 'green communitarianism' or eco-communitarian synthesis emerges, in which appropriately conceived and designed deliberative political systems, such as those referred to in the previous chapter, become more responsive to the interests of non-human nature and other ecological concerns than our present neoliberal democracies.

Communitarianism, ecologism, and other green political and social theorists advocate complementary forms of deliberative democracy. Eco-centric thinkers have sought to overcome apparent tensions between ecologism and democratic ideas in their thinking by advocating discursive or deliberative forms of democracy which are thought to better enable individuals to take on an advocacy role for their environments than representative democracy. Theorists from within ecologism and wider green political thought argue that deliberative democracy is at least a necessary condition for environmental outcomes (See Dobson 1996, Dryzek 2009 for example). I have shown that MacIntyre also favours deliberative forms of democracy as a way of enabling acknowledged dependence to be expressed within communities. His form of deliberative democracy is one that is decentralised to the level of local practice as a counter to modern centralised democracies which he argues privilege the interests of a narrow elite.

Thus, both MacIntyre and theorists of ecologism characterise politics as being, at least in part, about the character of a community and the people who comprise it. Both argue that politics is about the common good and the way in which an individual relates to the goods of community. Drawing upon MacIntyre's view both the process of politics and its outcome can be seen to be more than contingent.

Political discussion about the good of a community must take place at a level where the individual can be reasonably informed about its community's goals and character. For MacIntyre, this is the level of the local where individuals can meet face-to-face and where the practice of acknowledged dependence is learned and carried out.

We have seen that green theorists of deliberative democracy endorse this view as a way of empowering citizens affected by environmental issues who otherwise would have no voice. In the previous chapter, I explained how Kadlec and Friedman outline a system of checks against domination (Kadlec and Friedman 2007). They argue that appropriate design and control of deliberative structures can overcome some of the distortion by local elites and other powerful stakeholders that may prevent citizens from properly representing their interdependence. Such design should make it clear what the possible outcomes of deliberation are. They should include a wide spectrum of affected individuals. They should be organized by disinterested groups or representatives of all parties with a perspective on the particular issue at hand. Finally, they should acknowledge that the outcome worked towards will always be a confluence of ideas, and potential futures to add Gunnarson-Ostlings' insight, rather than a fixed consensus (See Kadlec and Friedman 2007, Gunnarson-Ostling 2014).

I would add to this MacIntyre's virtues of acknowledged dependence such as just generosity and truthfulness that characterize citizens in deliberation who try to genuinely represent the interests of others and appreciate their dependence on their environment.

## ***Conclusion***

Greens advocate deliberative type institutions such as citizens' forums and stakeholder consultations because they argue that such institutions offer an increased voice to greens and improve the chances of green outcomes. In focusing so much on process, however, greens have not paid enough attention to the type of the citizen who enters deliberation. This is where MacIntyre's work has so much to offer. His definition of the human being as a 'dependent rational animal' opens the way for an account of citizen virtue based on the idea of acknowledged dependence. The citizen who exhibits the virtues of acknowledged dependence within deliberative forums embedded within local communities will take their interdependencies – between humans and between humans and their natural environment – into account when making decisions.

Including the virtues of acknowledged dependence such as just generosity in the list of deliberative virtues, as an appreciation that selves and the environment are interdependent, the use of environmental proxies and a commitment to truthfulness, enquiry, and decentralized deliberation at the local level, increases the chance of challenging the dominance of narrow individualism and short-term material concerns in neoliberal democratic debate and decision making. These are mechanisms suggested by MacIntyre's approach. What ecologism then brings to MacIntyre's communitarianism, in turn, is an awareness that dependence 'overspills' the intra-human realm and takes in human relationships with their environments as well as intra-human relationships.

Importantly, such an eco-communitarian conception of politics relies on the notion that politics is a practice in which all citizens are engaged in meaningful debate and that political activity is carried out at a local level rather excluded to the level of the state. The politics suggested by a synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's thought suggests an ongoing recognition by citizens that politics is not just a matter of other individuals deciding how to run a country in the most financially efficient way. It is also a practice in which all can



shape their communities according to different conceptions of the good life, of which ecologism offers an alternative view to neoliberalism, and in which the vulnerable nature of our environments can be appreciated. It has been argued that an important part of deliberative democracy is the idea that the notion of the good is changeable, the character of a community is in a state of becoming, the virtues of acknowledged dependence, then, accompany and guide the procedure of politics in a greener direction.

In the following and final chapter, I will further develop a conception of politics that brings the thought of MacIntyre and ecologism together as an alternative to neoliberalism. In doing so I will defend MacIntyre's advocacy of face to face deliberation and the strengths of his revolutionary Aristotelian approach for greens.

## **Chapter 7:**

### **The Missing Green Politics of MacIntyre**

#### ***Introduction***

In this chapter, I argue that a decentralised deliberative politics derived from MacIntyre's thought ought to be embraced by greens because it is compatible with green principles. In particular, MacIntyre's ideas about political practice are useful for furthering green aims such as acknowledgement of the value of nature beyond its monetary worth within deliberation. MacIntyre's politics offers the prospect of effective checks on the instrumentalising practices of neoliberalism that dominate both humans and nature. This is achieved by enabling those who are interdependent with their environments to participate in the shaping of the character of their communities and resisting neoliberal hegemony in favour of locally determined forms of markets and politics.

Within MacIntyre's work, there is little direct reference to how a politics of acknowledged dependence could further green aims in substantive political decision making. This chapter seeks to bridge that gap by expounding upon MacIntyre's politics of local deliberative communities and arguing for its application in green political thought. MacIntyre himself makes only relatively short reference to the political structures of dependent rational animals in suggesting that we look to brief historical examples of where the virtues of acknowledged dependence may have been displayed in local communities (see MacIntyre 1999:142). He also demonstrates a cynicism towards the state suggesting that it is too nebulous and distant from communities and individuals to be a site where a politics that acknowledges dependence can be played

out (MacIntyre 1999:142). Instead, he implies a preference for deliberative politics within local communities (MacIntyre 1999:144). In referring to brief examples of mining communities in south Wales and Newfoundland fishing villages, as communities that may have displayed some of the virtues of acknowledged dependence, MacIntyre encourages his readership to further study these and other possible examples. However, in terms of his outline of the types of communities that would exhibit a politics of acknowledged dependence, this is largely all he offers. In order to demonstrate the relevance of MacIntyre's work to greens further elaboration and examples of the politics of acknowledged dependence is required. In this chapter, I claim that, with elaboration and contemporary case studies, MacIntyre's politics of acknowledged dependence can be shown to be very relevant for modern greens.

The first part of this chapter will develop MacIntyre's sketch of a deliberative and local politics of acknowledged dependence expanding on what he has argued in *After Virtue* (1994), *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), *Politics Philosophy and the Common Good* (1998) and other works. I will draw on compatible green views that appear close to MacIntyre's vision of politics, to develop MacIntyre's argument for a decentred politics of localised deliberative communities from a green perspective. It is my position that the political structures of acknowledged dependence can help to hold in check both the socially and ecologically corrosive practices of neoliberalism.

In the second part of the chapter, I will consider objections that MacIntyre's approach is too pessimistic in its view of the state. I will respond by arguing that MacIntyre's account of the politics of acknowledged dependence has to entail a much more decentred political world because it deals with collective notions of the good that are notoriously difficult to develop, and indeed wrongly and dangerously applied,

at such a massive scale as the state. Furthermore, other green positions such as eco-anarchism and social ecology have long argued that the state is ecologically and socially corrosive because of its *raison d'être* of managing populations: this entails bureaucracy, hierarchy and domination (See Bookchin 1989 for example). I will also consider the objection that MacIntyre is too utopian in his view of the localised politics of deliberation, that small villages in remote and homogenous parts of the world are hardly models on which to build a political theory. I argue that it is possible today to see real instances of deliberative politics at the local level in which people acknowledge their interdependence and are very conscious of checking their impact on their environment.

Thus, in the third and final part of the chapter, I consider these instances of localised deliberative politics that resist neoliberal hegemony in favour of local deliberation and acknowledged dependence. Here, Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism seems useful for 'fleshing out' MacIntyre's political thought in favour of local deliberation. I shall then examine the Tar Sands protests in Canada, and Rojava in northern Syria as real examples of a politics of acknowledged dependence. All of these cases, from Bookchin's hypothetical villages within cities to the real-life neighbourhoods of northern Syria, exhibit some form of localised deliberative politics in which acknowledged dependence is implicitly expressed in both social and environmental terms. I argue then that green political thought need not solely turn inwards to look at cultural or individual psychological change. Rather it should engage in developing a localised politics of acknowledged dependence rooted in a reconnection of everyday politics and practices with genuine reflection and deliberation.

## ***Part One: The Missing Politics of Acknowledged Dependence***

Although his suggestions for a politics of acknowledged dependence are somewhat brief and underdeveloped in *Dependent Rational Animals* it is possible to identify two threads in MacIntyre's work on politics: firstly, a disavowal of the state as the site of meaningful politics of dependent rational animals<sup>1</sup>, and secondly, an advocacy of deliberative politics at the local level. These two threads combine to form an outline of a politics that is locally rooted and deliberative in its form. This is a politics in which individuals are accountable to those who are dependent upon them.

### ***MacIntyre's negative view of the state***

To understand MacIntyre's conception of politics it is first necessary to understand his largely critical view of the modern state which stems from arguments in his moral philosophy. Understanding MacIntyre's negative thesis on the state enables us to see why he is an advocate of a much more localised and deliberative form of political practice and why greens may wish to tread a similar critical path regarding the state.

We have seen that MacIntyre is a Thomistic Aristotelian in his philosophy. This means that for him the good life is one spent in pursuit of the good for one's self. This is a pursuit that is enabled through the cultivation and possession of virtues appropriate to attaining one's own good. Such virtues are learnt through cooperation with others in practices that further the pursuit of goods. Thus, it turns out that the pursuit of the good and the acquisition of virtues, dispositions of character, are

---

<sup>1</sup> MacIntyre's view of the state is a largely Weberian one in that he views the state as an institution that is instrumentalising of its citizenry; largely engaged in means ends reasoning (MacIntyre 1998:74). For MacIntyre the state is in the business of managing populations in the interests of capital. Capitalism for MacIntyre represents the coherent absence of desert in society; an ideology for him that is destructive of cooperative reasoning (See Knight 1998:21).

inherently communal. Politics is the practice of the ordering of goods and thus is public in nature. MacIntyre's type of Aristotelianism corrects Aristotle's mistake of excluding women and non-property-owning individuals from politics. In fact, MacIntyre's political project has been a move towards extending the franchise as broadly as possible among all members of communities.<sup>2</sup> In doing so MacIntyre has been critical of the role of states in relation to claims that they might represent institutions where the politics of the common good takes place:

...they [modern states] cannot advance any justifiable claim to the allegiance of their members, and this [sic] because they are the political expression of societies of deformed and fragmented practical rationality, in which politics, far from being an area of activity in and through which other activities are rationally ordered, is itself one more compartmentalized sphere from which there has been excluded the possibility of asking those questions that most need to be asked (MacIntyre 1998:243).

For MacIntyre, the modern liberal state, based on the notion of neutrality, is an institution that is involved in the business of reconciling potentially incoherent views of the good. This is within a society in which philosophy, politics and our own many different individual roles are compartmentalised from one another. To do this at such a scale entails a political elite who exhibit a propensity for vices such as duplicity as they square competing views from within their citizenry largely in the interests of capital and free markets (MacIntyre 1998:238). Most of the citizenry in the modern

---

<sup>2</sup> As I have also argued in the previous chapter it is possible to extend consideration of what plays a part in shaping our good to our environments and non-human nature due to our shared interdependence.

state are excluded from influencing politics as these elites determine the political agenda (MacIntyre 1998:236). Consequently, the modern state resembles a large bureaucratic utility company managing its population that occasionally asks some of its members to do dangerous things for it; for example, firefighting or policing (MacIntyre 1994:303).

In the essay *Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good* (1998), containing much of his political thought, MacIntyre contends that there are four characteristics of the modern state (MacIntyre 1998:238). Firstly, it is 'unphilosophical' in that the nature of politics is largely unquestioned. Secondly, and relatedly, questions about what is good are actively moderated in politics to facilitate more efficient management of competing political views. They are downplayed to such a degree that much political debate does not refer back to questioning first principles or competing ways of life. So, important for my analysis, there is little chance of questioning the relationship of human societies to the natural environment at a deep or substantive level. Thirdly, the state is not actually neutral between competing views of the good life but rather promotes some over others. Particularly relevant for greens here are the state's promotion of economic growth in terms of GDP and the advocacy of aggressive free markets. MacIntyre adds a fourth criticism of the state: modern political debate is short-termist in its view and draws largely on rhetoric rather than deep enquiry. Again, from a green perspective, this limits the scope for meaningful prioritisation of issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change that are long term issues requiring a lot of rational enquiry and debate to address.

For MacIntyre, the modern state is a feature of the high degree of compartmentalisation of social life in modernity (MacIntyre 1998:236). Not only is

politics separated from philosophy in the interests of efficiency but individuals in their different roles are separated from philosophy and politics. All in all, there is little opportunity for individuals to meaningfully shape the character of such a massive and complex entity as the modern state -- particularly one that is premised on the near impossibility of reconciling differing views of the good and excludes them from substantive consideration. Rather the opposite is true, and politics is largely the management of large populations. MacIntyre regards this as problematic because it deprives the self of the means of determining the common good and thus the possibility of pursuing one's own good in a meaningful way. It also means that contemporary politics excludes public reflection on what contemporary politics is and what is and isn't on the political agenda.

In part, MacIntyre's ideal view of politics is framed by his view of the Athenian polis as described by Aristotle. However, for MacIntyre, the modern state is not the Athenian polis.<sup>3</sup>The Athenian polis entailed face-to-face deliberation about the good between citizens within their communities. In the polis, individuals could come together to deliberate with some shared understanding of the practices of their community (MacIntyre 1998:241). Within those communities, they participated face to face in practical reasoning about how best to organise their lives and associated practices. Those participating in deliberation in the polis were then able to shape the common good.

---

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that MacIntyre does not argue that the polis itself, as in the Athenian model, is the embodiment of his politics of rational dependence. He is well aware of its exclusions of most of the people of Athens, notably females and slaves. MacIntyre differs from Aristotle in holding that its (the *polis*) members must be understood to include all of its members (see Knight 2007:178).



On MacIntyre's understanding selves participate in practices through which they pursue goods, the attaining of which require the virtues established by each practice. For example, to be a good teacher requires a certain set of skills carried out in a certain way and to be a good driver requires another set of skills conducted in a certain way. MacIntyre argues that for each individual the question arises of how to structure the goods of each of our practices within our lives; how do I balance family life, playing music, pursuing social research or sport with one another such that my life is fulfilled? All these practices are in part communal, face-to-face, endeavours and so the question is, how do we order these goods in our communities to enable us to flourish? And so, we are actually asking a question about what the best way of life for our community is (MacIntyre 1998:240). This question, for MacIntyre, is at the heart of politics and as such politics is about the common good.

Thus, genuine citizenship, on MacIntyre's account, is not just the abstract contractual relationship of individual tax payer to a distant service provider (the state). It is an active citizenship of a community participating in shared practices in which we can potentially have an understanding of each other's goods and thus what might be good for all. Politics, then, requires genuine rational debate and deliberation about the ordering of goods in our lives as set out above. However, MacIntyre argues, such debate within communities and practices is distorted by the influence of external requirements for cost effectiveness or efficiency imposed upon them by the state or markets acting through one another (MacIntyre 1998:252).

Correspondingly, however, MacIntyre warns that communitarians make the mistake of thinking that the nation state should involve such a politics of the common good; he thinks it is too large and heterogeneous to allow genuine deliberation about

the good for individuals and their communities. Communitarian politics that seeks to promote a conception of the good at the level of the state is characterised negatively by MacIntyre as that of the *volk* (MacIntyre 1998:241). In which the character of a massive collection of individuals is subordinated to a single world view to the exclusion of the type of rational debate and practical reasoning about the ordering of goods described above. For MacIntyre, this is no different in function to the dominance of neoliberalism or conservatism at the level of the state. It is in distancing himself from other communitarians that MacIntyre is able to respond to the claim that he is a political conservative. He also denounces patriotism as he argues that the nation state cannot be the locus of the shared bonds and identity of community; when it has been, it, ‘...generates totalitarian and other evils’ (MacIntyre 1994:303). From MacIntyre’s Thomistic Aristotelian perspective, therefore, political communities ought to be communities in which differences between individuals and groups are learnt from; not stamped out or ignored (MacIntyre 1998:251).

Greens too have been, and ought to be, cautious about the state, by MacIntyre’s account. This is because the modern neoliberal state persists in excluding any substantive conception of the good that views nature as something other than a resource to be managed and consumed in the most efficient way.<sup>4</sup> It excludes the possibility that those who experience environmental harms in their various localities

---

<sup>4</sup> This claim holds even in the case of countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia that have constitutionalised environmental rights, particularly in relation to their indigenous populations. Whilst I completely agree with the aim of promoting greater environmental sensitivity, promoting equality amongst communities and individuals at this substantive level, I would argue that in the case of both countries there has been a strong tendency towards continuing environmental exploitation to fund these states. So, whilst both Ecuador and Bolivia have reshaped their constitutions explicitly to move beyond a neoliberal state structure of privatisation both states have found the need to capitalise on resource extraction to fund themselves. This has resulted in continuing tension between communities and the state and continued large scale extraction of resources by TNC’s (see Kennemore and Weeks 2011 for example).

may have a meaningful influence on the decisions taken when considering how we utilise the environment as a resource; indeed whether the environment is always best seen as a resource at all times. However, greens, on MacIntyre's account, ought also to weigh up the legitimacy of invoking a conception of the good life at the level of the modern nation state. This is because to do so may well involve imposing one very thick view of the good on to others who do not accept that view. I shall consider objections to this point later in the chapter and I will now turn to the form which MacIntyre's politics of rational dependence may take.

### ***MacIntyre's argument for deliberative politics***

...politics will be that practical activity which affords the best opportunity for the exercise of our rational powers, an opportunity afforded only by political societies to whose decision-making widely shared rational deliberation is central, societies which extend practical rationality from the farm and the fishing fleet, the household and the craft workplace, to its political assemblies. (MacIntyre 1998:243)

MacIntyre's conception of politics is constructed from the notion that it is through the rational justification of the pursuit of our different goods that we hold each other and ourselves to account (MacIntyre 1998:242). This practical reasoning is not something we carry out on our own as abstract individuals but rather one learnt and carried out through our social relationships. The state is too large an institution and the family too narrow a group to engage in rational deliberation and to learn the virtues (MacIntyre 1999:132). It is to the deliberative politics of the local community that MacIntyre looks as the locus of political reflection about the ordering of goods within a community by

the members of that community. We have also seen John Dryzek and Graham Smith argue strongly in favour of deliberation as a means of enabling green voices to be listened to in substantive political debate and decision making (See Dryzek 2005; Smith 2003).

MacIntyre proposes three characteristics of the type of deliberative community that could engage in rational enquiry and debate about the good. Firstly, in such a community positive law would be an extension of natural law<sup>5</sup> such that 'plain persons'<sup>6</sup> would understand the need for norms such as truthfulness, respect for others, patience and the need to care for others (MacIntyre 1998:247). Conformity to these norms arises, not from external imposition by the state or fetishism for laws, but from the cultivation of virtues such as prudence, temperateness, courage and justice where individuals find these virtues practically useful in their everyday practices and interactions (MacIntyre 1998:247). This is brought about largely by individuals' participation in shared practices and face-to-face deliberation whereby the individual sees their lives as partly bound up with the lives of others. This shared understanding is important for greens because the need to engage in activities that are environmentally benign would not then be an arbitrary imposition but the result of a community understanding the significance of human-nature interdependence. For example, this understanding of the need to respect a communities' ecological context in substantive

---

<sup>5</sup> Natural laws, for MacIntyre, hold practices together and are thus knowable by all involved in practices. They are substantive in that they absolutely preclude one person from harming another. They are also procedural as they need to be observed to engage in common enterprises. As Mark Murphy puts it: MacIntyre's understanding of natural law precepts are not just side constraints but also facilitators of pursuing ends in common (Murphy 2003:167). Murphy highlights MacIntyre's use of natural law over natural rights saying that the latter are individualistic whilst the former is social (Murphy 2003:169).

<sup>6</sup> This is a phrase often used by MacIntyre to refer to individuals.

deliberation can be seen in the constitution of Rojava that is inspired in part by the libertarian municipalism of Murray Bookchin, as I shall discuss later.

Secondly, MacIntyre argues that we can find examples of these types of community where deliberation is conducted within practices in which we are engaged in a shared pursuit of the good such as household life, schools and neighbourhoods (MacIntyre 1998:248). In such small scale settings, it is possible to include all members in political debate in some way such that office holders and citizens can hold each other to account. This type of politics is in conflict with the nation state as characterised by MacIntyre. MacIntyre argues that the local element of scale is important because it militates against the deformation of compartmentalization inherent in large scale modern states (see MacIntyre 1998). In this setting citizens encounter each other in their different roles and so individuals are judged for what they are as a whole: as, for example, a family person, worker, carer and driver. Importantly, we can also take into account, in such a setting, the needs of those who are dependent upon us and those on whom we may be dependent, thus facilitating *just generosity*, care and consideration given without the expectation of reciprocation in relationships between adults and their dependants, that I elucidated in the previous chapter. In such a situation those most affected by harms to their environment, be they the consequences of rapid urbanisation, industrialisation or automation, are better able to express their shared concerns collectively and to put these concerns into the context of their daily lives. This differs very much from the present picture in which concerns about the environment come across as abstract and technical issues on a massive scale such as climate change. Furthermore, there is the added appeal of this

approach in seeing that an individual's private concerns are actually public concerns and that they can influence the shape and character of their community directly.

Thirdly, markets should be local and small scale; these for MacIntyre are more genuinely free markets than those of neoliberalism. As such, he stands in opposition to large scale, global 'free' markets that, he argues, violate social relationships and forcibly deprive workers of meaningful productive work (MacIntyre 1998:249). Such large scale free markets create inequality of wealth that in turn creates inequalities of economic and political power (MacIntyre 1998:249). MacIntyre argues that his ideal small-scale society may never attain the level of technological development of advanced modernity but that this technological development has come at the high price of sacrificing the common good of such communities. In other words, there would be qualitatively better justice in distribution within such communities than within large states. As such, MacIntyre establishes that there is clearly a conflict between his local communities and the, '...international and national economic order' (MacIntyre 1998:249). This is a point on which many greens, such as Murray Bookchin, would agree suggesting that our economies be coordinated from the local scale to sensitise them to environmental harms and to militate against their exploitative nature (see Bookchin 1997). This claim resonates with Kenis and Lievens's critique (discussed in chapter 2) of the neoliberal propensity for seeing environmental problems as solely resource problems to be solved by better allocations of resources (Kenis and Lievens 2013). Thus, MacIntyre's local deliberative politics offers the prospect of both including voices which speak for differing views on nature and an economic model in tandem that could check the exploitative aspects of neoliberalism on humans and non-humans.

A final important feature found in MacIntyre's work that underpins the political project of acknowledged dependence is education (see MacIntyre 2002). For MacIntyre, an education in competing views of the good life, as well as the virtues of practices that individuals engage in, is key to moving towards establishing a politics of acknowledged dependence. As such, the place of education is to transition from our present politics to a politics of acknowledged dependence (See MacIntyre 2002). Thus far I have alluded to the fact that it is important, from MacIntyre's point of view, for individuals to learn from one another and to reflect on their practices and the ordering of goods in life. The role of education is then very important in enabling the acknowledgement of dependence within communities and MacIntyre has called for a utopian education as a way of overcoming the hegemony of neoliberalism. That is, an education in the virtues and in critical reflection on political and social practices as a staple of comprehensive education for all (see MacIntyre 2002). Such an education would encourage a broad understanding of different roles in society as well as reflection on the first principles that guide the various forms of ideologies and religions within society.

MacIntyre suggests that the provision of such a critical education could stem from a general curriculum across a broad range of subjects for all, including the teaching of different views on history and the good life (MacIntyre 2002:14). The role of delivering this education seems to come down to teachers themselves within pre-existing institutions and practices, as experts in different practices equipped with the pedagogical skill to guide learners through their fields. As such, this appears to be a transitioning away from the state as educator to a more devolved and, as MacIntyre terms it, utopian view of education (MacIntyre 2002). This form of education involves a

rejection of the view of schools as input output models where learning is reduced to measurable progress alone. The aim of such an education is to enable individuals to understand competing views of the good and to evaluate what is best for themselves and those who are dependent upon them (see MacIntyre 2002). On such an understanding it is necessary to expose students in all disciplines to first order questions including the way in which we view nature. This is what we might call a critical education in which pedagogy explicitly acknowledges differing standpoints on questions and facilitates student's understanding and appreciation for these standpoints in a setting in which they can link these views to their own practices.<sup>7</sup>

Taken together, these four points represent a picture of a politics of rational dependence that offers a better prospect of taking into account green concerns and the interests of non-human nature than is offered under neoliberalism. MacIntyre's local deliberative politics is underpinned by a broad curriculum and by learning from each other through engaging in shared practices and deliberation. This engages citizens in critical thinking framed by a morality of the virtues in which all can question our goods in common and acknowledge the interests of those with whom we are interdependent. These small-scale deliberative structures that prioritise the interests of their members resist the distortion of interests by external market forces through shared and active deliberation. They enable the inclusion of a greater diversity of views

---

<sup>7</sup> Approaches to educating citizens for democratic participation can be found within the literature in environmental political thought. Dobson (2002) covers the role of citizenship in the national curriculum as a vehicle for delivering sustainability education. He argues that an approach in which various standpoints on the environment are made explicit to students within the classroom is an effective approach. This is because it challenges the notion that environmental issues are not political and engages students with reflecting on their own views with regards to the environment. Whilst MacIntyre's utopian education is not explicitly focused on the environment, and his is more a call to individual institutions and practitioners to adapt their pedagogy, I do think that the two approaches share the need to make explicit to students competing world views in their various subjects.



on the good beyond that of economic growth. Thus, those with environmental concerns and those who give weight to the interests of non-human nature are better able to shape the character of their communities alongside their concerns for future generations and those who are dependent upon them.

There are two objections to this view that I will consider and in doing so clarify further some of the preceding points. Firstly, is the objection that MacIntyre's view is far too pessimistic with regards to the role of the modern state. Secondly, that MacIntyre's view of the virtues of a local politics of deliberation, and thus the green view I have presented, is far too utopian/romantic. The next section examines these views in turn and responds to the criticisms with a defence of MacIntyre's view.

### ***Part Two: A critique of MacIntyre's view of the state***

MacIntyre can be - and has been - criticised as having an overly pessimistic view of the state (See Breen 2007:412-413). He has also been accused of taking a romantic view of small scale, preindustrial communities and their traditional practices as the preferred sites of a meaningful politics of acknowledged dependence (Breen 2002:198). With regard to the latter point, I argue that MacIntyre's advocacy of such communities makes sense in light of his scepticism of the modern tendency towards managerialism and bureaucracy. I would further argue that his critical view of the state and argument for local communities of practice ought to be taken seriously from a green perspective and that greens should consider a serious weighing up of the pros and cons of using resources of the state in the pursuit of the good life (see MacIntyre 1998:252).<sup>8</sup> I

---

<sup>8</sup> To be exact MacIntyre states that: 'it (local community) will from time to time have to concern itself with the conflicts between and within nation states, sometimes aligning itself with this or that contending party in order to assist in defeating such politically destructive forces as those of imperialism

present the implications of MacIntyre's argument for greens as advocating political practice out-with the state in building and sustaining communities engaged in shared practices and in which dependence is acknowledged.

Both John Barry (2012, 2013) and Mike Hannis (2016) draw upon the usefulness of MacIntyre's concept of acknowledged dependence as a means, in part, of establishing a green concept of citizenship and virtue ethics respectively. It should be evident from what I have argued in this thesis, especially the previous chapter, that I am in agreement with this approach, particularly where I am arguing that ontology is a vital part of political theory and of actual deliberation and political decision making. Barry, in particular, endorses MacIntyre's highlighting of vulnerability, in contrast to its denial in contemporary politics, and the partial omission of animal and human nature as a starting point for thinking about politics (Barry 2012:53 see also Barry 2013). More specifically Barry argues that MacIntyre's notions of vulnerability and acknowledged dependence can be used to critique political theories that ignore or deny such concepts and to explore the forms of, '...social and economic life which fully acknowledge human vulnerability and dependence' (Barry 2012:53). Again, I concur with this project that, as Barry also notes, is shared with some ecofeminist theorists such as MacGregor (2011), Mellor (1992) and Salleh (2009) who are engaged in exploring an ecofeminist ethic of care (Barry 2012:51).<sup>9</sup>

---

or National Socialism or Stalinist Communism. But it will always also have to be wary and antagonistic in all its dealings with the politics of the state and market economy, wherever possible challenging their protagonists to provide the kind of justification for their authority which they cannot in fact supply. For the state and market economy are so structured as to subvert and undermine the politics of local community. Between the one politics and the other there can only be continuing conflict' (MacIntyre 1998:252).

<sup>9</sup> MacIntyre also notes the importance of such an ethic of care for relationships within communities (MacIntyre 1994:192, 1999 121-123).

Barry also notes that there is much of MacIntyre's localist view that may be of merit for greens. However, he cautions that accepting MacIntyre's conceptions of acknowledged dependence and vulnerability does not entail accepting all of MacIntyre's political thought (Barry 2012:52). In particular, he refers to MacIntyre's apparent anti-industrial tendencies, advocacy of pre-modern forms of social life and, referring to Keith Breen's argument (Breen 2007), his favouring of traditional forms of collective production as the only examples of meaningful work. Barry looks to Breen's critique of MacIntyre in his argument for distinctly modern progressive forms of social labour such as local exchange trading systems as examples of re-embedding the market in society. Barry also sees useful parallels between the Transition Town movement's reskilling and resilience-building projects and MacIntyre's notion of a practice. In doing so Barry is keen to stress the potential pitfalls of adopting MacIntyre's approach in that it may if treated uncritically lead greens to engage in romantic and backward looking anti-modern experiments (Barry 2012:115).

Barry also couples MacIntyre's neo-Aristotelianism with the civic republican tradition (Barry 2012:218). For Barry this is as a corrective to liberal theorising and the dominance of the view of 'market society' and the 'reduction of politics to preference aggregation' (Barry 2012:219). Barry favours civic republicanism because, he argues, republicans are, '...more likely to support the type of state regulation and planning of the economy of the type consistent with achieving a low-carbon, high wellbeing economy...than liberals' (Barry 2012:219). However, this republican view of the state, as regulator, is unlikely to sit comfortably with MacIntyre's pessimistic view of the state.

Michael Hannis draws upon a virtue ethics, developed from MacIntyre's notion of acknowledged dependence, to advocate policies that limit environmentally malevolent behaviour, '...eschewing liberal neutrality, in favour of government based on a substantive and ecologically informed conception of human flourishing.' (Hannis 2016:192). Again, whilst I agree with drawing on MacIntyre's notion of acknowledged dependence to inform decision making, what I have shown of MacIntyre's arguments against the modern state suggest that adopting one particular ethic over another at the level of the state is at odds with MacIntyre's criticism of communitarianism. MacIntyre praises the liberal state for being neutral and attacks communitarians for supposing that the state could and should be the repository of values such as a particular view of the good of non-human nature.

Whilst I support Barry's and Hannis's calls for greening the state and agree with the necessity to lobby the state to take a more benevolent approach towards the environment and to promote a politics that acknowledges dependence and challenges dominant conceptions of the good, I wish to defend MacIntyre's understanding of a politics of acknowledged dependence as being necessarily locally rooted and what taking this literally could mean for greens. A close reading of MacIntyre's work, putting together his criticism of the state, advocacy of locally based deliberative politics, and coupling with an acknowledged dependence that incorporates non-human entities and our shared environments leads to a strong case that greens should adopt MacIntyre's decentralised politics of acknowledged dependence. I argue that MacIntyre's view entails a particular type of local politics in which the state has a minimal role to play. In fact, some of what MacIntyre argues could be seen to form a politics of resistance to

state bureaucracy, particularly where it is intertwined with capitalism and particularly when it comes to shaping the character of communities.

Barry (2012:194) concurs with MacIntyre's rooting the economy in local practices and, following Breen (2007), critically brings MacIntyre's thought on practices to bear on modern forms of practice. I also agree that MacIntyre's notion of practices could be applied to a reformed form of modern socio-economic activity. This would be activity that is driven socially and serves social ends, re-embedding the economy under social control and admitting that economic activity is also social activity. Indeed, in the following section, I will demonstrate that MacIntyre does refer to modern forms of practice such as the construction of schools as examples of socially 're-embedded' economic activity. However, in terms of the institutions of governance that direct social and economic activity, MacIntyre's is a much more critical view of the modern state, certainly than that taken by Hannis.

### ***In defence of MacIntyre's view of the state***

It follows from what I have said previously that I accept MacIntyre is pessimistic with regards to the role of the state<sup>10</sup> in relation to a politics of the common good. However, in agreement with Kelvin Knight (2007) I suggest that MacIntyre is coherent, given his conception of politics, in that politics ought to be the ordering of goods by those engaged in practices; i.e. plain persons. Moreover, I argue that MacIntyre's advocacy of local communities refers to local preindustrial modes of practice for good reason: these preindustrial practices were both legitimate and important sites of

---

<sup>10</sup> Though he is pragmatic in accepting that there may be times in which local communities may need to play a role in shaping the character of the state to defend against tyranny and the imposition of market forces. Kelvin Knight argues that for MacIntyre, '...the least bad kind of state is one that is small, tolerant and leaves local communities relatively free to organise their own affairs' (Knight 2007:169).

resistance to the more destructive elements of industrial capitalism in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, I also want to argue that MacIntyre's conception of a practice, though entailing a localised practice of politics, need not constrain itself to preindustrial or parochial examples.

MacIntyre's politics are based on Thomas Aquinas's (i.e., a Thomist) interpretation of Aristotle combined with a critique of Marxism and a Weberian view of the state. This entails a cynical stance towards the state that MacIntyre conceives as a hierarchy of bureaucratic managers who share in the interests of the managers of capital (MacIntyre 1994:85). We have seen that for MacIntyre politics is the rational deliberation about and ordering of goods of a community. MacIntyre would argue against Hanner's acceptance of the state, as he has done against other communitarians, as an institution that can and should be guided by a shared conception of the common good. This is because, for MacIntyre, the state is much too large and remote an institution for individuals to be able to come together to rationally deliberate about the ordering of their goods (1999:132). Furthermore, MacIntyre warns of the dominance of one form of the good over the plurality of goods found across different communities, practices, and individuals. This is undesirable as, from MacIntyre's Thomistic Aristotelian position, communitarians falsely equivocate the good of all individuals with that of the state as if it were the repository of values for their community (1999:142). The state is not, and has never been, an institution where all members are participating in practices and deliberation which could shape the character of that community. Where the state becomes the repository of conceptions of the good this invariably results in the management of some to the ends of others.

Furthermore, MacIntyre points to the state's power to co-opt practices and ways of life in favour of the pursuit of capital and social management (Knight 2007:170). This is an argument in MacIntyre's thinking that is inimical to his politics of local deliberation about the ordering of goods, as I shall now demonstrate. MacIntyre argues that politics is best pursued where the 'social activity of production' can take place for itself (Knight 2007:174), rather than for the external goods of capital accumulation or bureaucratic efficiency, and without external management instrumentalising and alienating workers from their labour. We can see this view in MacIntyre's reading of Marx's thesis on Feuerbach, where he refers to the revolutionary struggles of the Silesian weavers that Marx would have knowledge of but did not himself see as part of revolutionary resistance to capitalism (MacIntyre 1998:223). However, MacIntyre argues that, in fact, these were the revolutions against the alienating effects of capital which Marx overlooked, perhaps because he saw them as defeated ways of life (MacIntyre 1998:232). These were revolutions by communities engaged in a central practice such as weaving. These revolts took place in defence of the activity upon which they were dependent as well as their very way of life against the imposition of external goals of efficiency and profit by the state and capitalist class.<sup>11</sup> The weaving was an activity self-directed by those communities in that those communities determined their own character and pursuit of the good.

The proletarianisation of those communities, caused by the expansion of industrialisation and national and global markets, was itself a destruction of this way of

---

<sup>11</sup> MacIntyre refers to EP Thompson's account of Hand Loom Weavers of Lancashire and Yorkshire in which Thompson refers to them as, '...a community of independent small producers, exchanging their products without the distortions of masters and middlemen' (Thompson 1963:295). MacIntyre says of this that they were an example of a community who in sustaining their way of life had to reject the dominant civil society and their 'economic and technological triumphs' (MacIntyre 1998:232).

life that those communities were resisting. This is at odds with the Marxist view that resistance to the exploitation of workers by capital would only come about through the growth of a single working class with a shared interest. In the case of which, it turned out, a shared interest could only be sustained through the bureaucratic manipulation of worker's interests involving a great deal of coercion. In effect, the Stalinist state and liberal capitalist state share in the same vice: managing their populations to their own elite's view of the good (MacIntyre 1998:237). MacIntyre views this as Marxism's failure; a failure that MacIntyre has endeavoured to correct by locating emancipatory practice at the level of individuals' shared practices. Thus, MacIntyre's view of the type of a politics that would enable acknowledged dependence is interlinked with an advocacy of local forms of practice and deliberation, over and above the bureaucracy of the state and distortions of free markets or socialist ideology.

In sum, an initial defence of MacIntyre's view of the state is that he understands emancipatory practice, rational deliberation about the good and the shaping of one's own life, to be located meaningfully within localised practices where face to face deliberation can occur. These local practices such as the cottage industries associated with the wool trade, where the determination of the goods internal to weaving and the life of weavers could be self-directed, were in themselves sites of resistance to co-optation by capital and state to their own ends. Those local practices and communities were where individuals and communities could direct their own ends. MacIntyre argues that though states secure important services such as defence and health care, communities should weigh up carefully their entanglement with the state if they wish to be able to determine their own character (MacIntyre 1999:132).



This is particularly the case when it comes to re-embedding control of the economy within society. I shall say more on this below in defence of MacIntyre's local politics.

### ***In defence of a politics of the local community***

Kelvin Knight is an advocate of MacIntyre's politics of local community. He characterises MacIntyre's argument for how the politics of acknowledged dependence can be played out by offering three points from MacIntyre in response to his critics. These points support my argument for accepting MacIntyre's politics of local communities. They also serve to defend against the criticism that MacIntyre romanticises preindustrial and localised politics.

Firstly, Knight argues that MacIntyre advocates a politics of withdrawal from the state so that local communities of practice refuse co-optation by the dominant social order. As I have argued above, this advocacy for local politics stems from the fact that, '...locality affords participation in rational deliberation and decision making to all' (Knight 2007:180). As such MacIntyre's advocacy of local communities is not an advocacy of localism for its own sake but rather a particular kind of local community of practices in which all individuals are free to associate and deliberate about their goods in common, and in which individuals can learn from one another about their goods. Thus, from a green perspective, MacIntyre's localism is important as it means that green voices, presently excluded by a dominance of neoliberal thinking, have a chance of being heard in debate that shapes the character of their community. Furthermore, drawing upon the notion of acknowledged dependence, in which the dependence of others is taken into account, carrying out deliberation at this level entails a greater degree of representation of those who are dependent on the participants of

deliberation. This includes the very young and the old, as well as the environments in which those communities are embedded.

The second point that Knight offers from MacIntyre is directly addressed to Breen's criticism that MacIntyre, '...venerates peripheral social orders,' '...without contesting managerialism,' and large-scale industrialism (Breen 2002:198). As we have seen above, MacIntyre argues that the politics of local practices are in conflict with that of state bureaucracy and capitalism. In creating and sustaining local practices managerialism and the politics of the large scale are being contested. Local practices involving shared deliberation such as the creation of local schools by the community, or creation of local energy generation, would bring people together to aim at common goals and resist the narrow individualism promoted under neoliberalism. Knight offers MacIntyre's example of the, '...founding of a new neighbourhood school...Architects, construction workers, teachers and parents all have a part to play, so that the goods of architecture and of building, of education and of family life, all serve the common good of the children.' (MacIntyre 2003:47). In participating in such a project individuals would resist compartmentalisation, that is the separation of individuals from each other, and the division of their individual roles such as architect, parent, environmentalist, or labourer, by learning something of each other's practice. For example, this would particularly be the case should a member of the project be both a parent and builder. Such a scheme would be a subversion of dominant 'cultural norms' (Knight 2007:182) in which specialisation tends to diminish our ability to understand each other's goods. MacIntyre argues that such projects often fall short when, '...administrators substitute themselves for practitioners, imposing some bureaucratically acceptable form on the enterprise' (MacIntyre 2003:47) or when

those involved, ‘...have become so specialised that they are unable to cooperate except on their own terms’ (MacIntyre 2003:47). Thus, MacIntyre offers a response to Breen’s criticism, that he uncritically venerates pre/early modern traditions, MacIntyre’s thought can, and indeed MacIntyre does, utilise a modern form of practice that is in opposition to the compartmentalisation and managerialism of neoliberalism. For greens, this means that MacIntyre’s is not a simple veneration of preindustrial modes of production for their romantic appeal, though those modes of life may very well have virtues that make them much more environmentally benign than industrial modes of practice. From a green point of view what is of more importance is that these are communities which resist neoliberal marketisation; in which the market and forms of production are embedded within social practices. In such a way, markets and industry become human scaled and serve the purposes of those communities rather than communities being subservient to market imperatives and large-scale industrialism.

MacIntyre recognises that resources may have to be obtained from the state and exchanges between communities would have to take place to sustain such an endeavour (Knight 2007:183). However, what is important, in defending and advocating MacIntyre’s point of view, is that the means, the procurement of external goods such as capital, ought to be subordinate to the ends, that of building a good school community and the pursuit of the goods of excellence in doing so. Furthermore, those participating in this shared practice should be allowed to participate in shared practical reasoning about the goal of the practice and the best ways to go about it, such that those involved be able to order the goods internal to those practices.

The third point which Knight offers is that MacIntyre's politics is one of active resistance within presently existing practices:

'...To be good...is to be engaged in struggle and a perfected life is one perfected in key part in and through conflicts (such as) those engaged in by members of some rank and file trade union movements, of some tenants' associations, of the disability movement, of a variety of farming fishing and trading cooperatives, and by some feminist groups, and on the other by those who are at work within schools, hospitals, a variety of industrial and financial workplaces, laboratories, theatres , and universities in order to make of these, so far as possible, scenes of resistance to the dominant ideology and dominant social order (MacIntyre 2006:146 in Knight 2007:187).

According to MacIntyre, it is within such practices as these that we find the potential, and examples of, deliberation and ordering of the goods of excellence inimical to the political structures of acknowledged dependence. At these sites, we see conflict between these practices themselves and the dominant social order. One very prevalent example is the struggle of hospitals in the UK in putting the wellbeing of patients ahead of that of financial efficacy imposed by the state.

To summarise the defence of MacIntyre's politics, two things can be said. First, MacIntyre is indeed pessimistic about the state because of its history of working with either capital or socialist elites to co-opt labour. However, this should be qualified with his pragmatism in regard to the fact that communities will need to utilise the resources of the state but that in doing so the means acquired, such as finance, should be

subordinated to the ends of those communities. Second, MacIntyre's alternative to the state makes sense in light of this pessimism. Local communities by virtue of scale and their engagement in shared practices are qualitatively better sites for deliberation and the acknowledgement of interdependence. MacIntyre does indeed refer to peripheral and pre-industrial practices, as well as to the qualities of Benedictine Monasticism, as examples of the conditions for a politics of acknowledged dependence. Despite being peripheral these are important examples because they are instances of resistance to the dominance of institutions: institutions that subordinate the goods of excellence to their own external goods such as the pursuit of profit. Furthermore, MacIntyre also offers examples of far more contemporary practices. I would like to strengthen this defence by arguing in the following section that it is possible to see other instances of a politics of acknowledged dependence playing out. These examples not only demonstrate the practical nature of MacIntyre's politics but also its affinity with green ends.

### ***Part Three: Realising a politics of acknowledged dependence***

There are two aspects of a green politics of acknowledged dependence that seem important to foreground. Firstly, what is largely missing in MacIntyre's work is an explanation of how his view of politics could actually work beyond village or monastic life. I argue that this gap can be filled by looking to a concrete plan devised by green political theorist, Murray Bookchin, whose ideas are compatible in many respects with MacIntyre's, even though they do not cite each other. Pairing up MacIntyre and Bookchin's arguments, I argue, is a logical step in an approach to a green politics that draws on MacIntyre's notion of acknowledged dependence. Secondly, what is

somewhat missing in MacIntyre's work is a sense that his politics could be relevant to contemporary political struggles in a diverse and globalized world. This gap can begin to be filled by looking at some recent examples that demonstrate both the practicability and affinity of MacIntyre's politics of acknowledged dependence with green goals. Goals such as re-embedding the economy within society and redefining economic activity in terms such as living well, rather than the pursuit of economic growth, and for the appreciation within deliberation that nature embodies a plurality of meanings and values.

The first example of a potential structure for a politics of acknowledged dependence can be seen in the founder of social ecology Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism. Libertarian municipalism avows the virtues of small scale deliberative communities in which politics and the economy are decentred to the local human scale. Although there are differences in the lineage of acknowledged dependence and libertarian municipalism, there is much that both conceptions of politics share. It could be argued that the politics of both MacIntyre and Bookchin is utopian. However, the development of the autonomous cantons of the Kurdish region of Rojava in northern Syria, whose constitution is in part inspired by Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, suggests that it is possible to pursue a decentred deliberative politics that puts human and ecological concerns at the forefront of politics. There are also other instances in which the promotion of the market over human and natural concerns has been resisted by local deliberative politics; namely in indigenous peoples' resistance to tar sands extraction in the Athabasca basin in Canada.

A politics of acknowledged dependence, then, is not so utopian as it may seem. Localised deliberative politics can be utilised to resist the more destructive aspects of

the neoliberal economy. Even if MacIntyre's politics is utopian and somewhat romantic there has, in the past few years, been a revival in green utopian thinking against a neoliberal closing down of political alternatives (see J.K. Gibson-Graham et al 2013, Bradley and Hedren eds 2014). In the face of this dominance of neoliberalism, many theorists are looking for a hopeful politics and testing the promise of small scale experiments in democracy and localised political resistance.

### ***Acknowledging dependence through Libertarian Municipalism***

Murray Bookchin's work was popular amongst greens up until the 1990s. Since then it has been somewhat forgotten particularly within European green political thought where he was, compared to the USA, relatively unknown. I would argue that greens who are concerned about resisting the hegemony of neoliberalism in political thought and practice would be well advised to revisit Bookchin's work and its relevance to pressing a green agenda. In fact, if we do look outside Europe and North America there has been a revival of Bookchin's work in the cantons of northern Syria.

Both Bookchin and MacIntyre are motivated by and, at the same time, are critical of Marxism. They have similar criticisms of the Leninist and Stalinist use of the state to drive forwards a communist revolution that forcibly collectivised workers' communes into industrialised bureaucracies, removing the autonomy of these groups (see Bookchin 1971:202). Bookchin turned to his form of social anarchism or libertarian municipalism,<sup>12</sup> whilst MacIntyre, as we have seen, developed his Thomistic

---

<sup>12</sup> Bookchin was very much opposed to the construal of anarchism as an individualist lifestyle form of protest against the state and capitalist institutions. Rather he advocated a much more social reading of anarchism in which freedom was achieved through mutual aid and cooperation within communities rather than individual lifestyle change; which he saw as impotent. Bookchin's form of social anarchism envisioned a programme for change with confederations of municipalities of democratic assemblies and workers cooperatives which he termed libertarian municipalism.

Aristotelianism, as alternatives to conventional Marxist analysis. Both theorists are also critical of neoliberalism and identify problems with its hegemony. In particular, Bookchin is critical of the 'homogenizing' effects of the market on individuals and loss of well-rounded individuals (Bookchin 1982:138). Bookchin argues that in our 'market society' mass industrialisation and consumption has led to the domination and destruction of 'organic' nature by 'inorganic nature'. Such that: 'The homogenization of ecosystems goes hand in hand with the homogenization of the social environment and the so-called individuals who populate it' (Bookchin 1982:138). Bookchin's model of libertarian municipalism arguably can be seen as a form of politics of acknowledged dependence that is also sensitive to ecological concerns.

Firstly, Bookchin's proposal for the scale of communities in which political reasoning is to be conducted is local and small scale, just as MacIntyre's social and political structures of acknowledged dependence are (see above and MacIntyre 1999). Bookchin proposes small scale communities of neighbourhoods or 'municipalities' (Bookchin 1995:240) as 'cultures of revolt', to borrow Janet Biehl's phrase (Biehl 1997:156), in which 'mutual aid' and 'co-operation' can be practiced face to face in 'humanly scaled' communities (Bookchin 1995:242). Such communities are those of neighbourhoods, towns, and communes, with Bookchin referring to the historical examples of the Spanish barrios or Paris Commune as favourable examples in which individuals come together in communal endeavour to represent themselves (Bookchin 1995:203). This model echoes MacIntyre's picture of small scale communities engaging in common projects and acknowledging the interdependence of individuals within them. For Bookchin, these communities facilitate qualitatively better social and political structures in which individuals are free to associate and cooperate to shape



their community free from domination. Furthermore, this freedom from domination and 'homogenization' extends to the environments with which these communities interact as it is these communities embedded in nature who are responsible for their environments, rather than large and distant corporations and states.

Secondly, Bookchin's municipalities are deliberative in their form with citizens representing themselves in debate. Bookchin refers to the debates within the Athenian agora with ongoing public discussion being central to his view (Bookchin1995:232). For Bookchin, in line with his critique of hierarchy and domination, policy making is enacted by popular community assemblies (Bookchin 1995:224).<sup>13</sup> Power should flow from bottom up, from individuals through assemblies, contra representative democratic models based on the nation state. Bookchin, like MacIntyre, is all too aware of the potential for parochialism within family and village communities. His answer is that communities become outward looking and reflexive by engaging in confederations of communities through confederal councils to which delegates are sent with mandates from their respective communities (Bookchin 1995:224). Again, Bookchin is keen to stress that it is the community which has the executive power rather than the delegates (Bookchin 1995:225). In such a way these communities are set up to resist the hierarchy of state bureaucracy with Bookchin envisioning a period of dual power (Bookchin 1995:244).

Thirdly, such communities resist the neoliberal market and its drive to consume by managing their own economies. Bookchin argues for a, 'politicisation of the economy ...dissolving economic decision-making into the social domain' (Bookchin

---

<sup>13</sup> Again, as with MacIntyre, whilst Bookchin looks to the Athenian polis he is aware of its considerable exclusions and privileging of propertied male citizens (See Bookchin 1989:69). His thought, like MacIntyre's, advocates open and inclusive deliberative forms.

1995:235). Furthermore, much like MacIntyre, Bookchin argues against overspecialisation and in favour of municipalised economic endeavours that encourage the engagement of the community in shared projects where its members find themselves, ‘...in face to face relationships working to achieve a general interest that surmounts separate, vocationally defined interests’ (Bookchin 1995:235). In such a municipalised economy, agriculture, manufacturing, and trade sit together and are carried out by the members of the municipality. The scaling back of the ownership of the means of production to the municipality, for Bookchin, acts as a scaling back of industrialisation to a smaller more human scale. In such a way Bookchin is not romantically anti-technology, quite the opposite, he favours the rational use of appropriate technologies by the municipalities but in a way that is sensitive to the environments in which they are embedded (Bookchin 1971:130).

Finally, as with MacIntyre, Bookchin links education to fostering the deliberative and democratic attitudes of members of the municipality towards one another and their environments. As with MacIntyre education facilitates the transition to devolved deliberative democracy. Furthermore, like MacIntyre, Bookchin’s is both an education through participating in practices and projects and one of a general public education. Bookchin uses the term *philia* or solidarity, as opposed to patriotism,<sup>14</sup> that the process of political education through political participation is aiming to achieve (Bookchin 1995:227). Similarly to MacIntyre, this is only possible for Bookchin through public education at the scale of the municipality, coupled with participation in the politics and practical activities of the community. Importantly such

---

<sup>14</sup> We have seen in MacIntyre’s response to Taylor, in chapter 2, that MacIntyre too is sceptical of patriotism.

a process of citizenship education is part of an always ongoing process of identity formation rather than the 'obedience' of patriotism (Bookchin 1995:227). For Bookchin citizenship becomes an art of 'self-expression' in the public theatre of the municipality as opposed to the privatisation and alienation of the modern city (Bookchin 1995:232). Although Bookchin does not refer explicitly here to the critical education we have seen advocated by MacIntyre, he does argue that education should enable the individual to participate meaningfully in public life. Furthermore, such participation in face-to-face activity should foster mutual respect for those within the municipality and an understanding of their shared environment.

There is much more that could be said of the affinities and differences between Bookchin and MacIntyre's politics. The two theorists never cited each other though they both share parallel visions that draw critically upon both Marx and Aristotle. I have argued thus far that, though neither has referred to each other in their work, Bookchin's libertarian municipalism is a green form of politics that puts into practice a politics of acknowledged dependence as suggested by MacIntyre. Such a politics not only acknowledges human inter-dependence but also addresses those issues that prevent individuals from acknowledging their environmental dependencies. I would argue that greens who are concerned about politics and political resistance to neoliberalism would do well to refer to Bookchin. However, it could still be argued that Bookchin's politics is just as utopian as MacIntyre's and so I wish to turn now to some contemporary, 'real life' examples where local communities have exhibited a politics of acknowledged dependence.

## ***Rojava and Democratic Confederalism***

It is not only remote Welsh mining communities where a politics of acknowledged dependence can work. The first contemporary example of a potential politics of acknowledged dependence is the cantons of Rojava in Northern Syria. These are found within the Kurdish region of the middle-east but contain a multiplicity of ethnic and religious identities. In the wake of the 2010 Arab Spring and subsequent Syrian civil war, these cantons have been brought together under a shared constitution inspired, in part, by Bookchin's libertarian municipalism.<sup>15</sup> They have formed, in part, in resistance to the dominance of the Syrian and Turkish states (Yegen 2016:365) but also to the incursion of Islamic fundamentalism into the region with Rojava being noted for its female militias (YPJ) forming part of the PKK (Kurdistan worker's party) defence force in the region. There is much to be said, both critically and constructively, of this region but here I will focus on the extent to which the politics of Rojava resembles that of a politics of acknowledged dependence.

Firstly, the politics of Rojava, though its origins lie in the socialist left of the PKK, is now explicitly that of democratic confederalism embodied within the constitution of the region (see Hosseini 2016:258). This is a confederation of towns, villages and cities

---

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note at this point that the research on the political project in Rojava and in southern Turkey is quite polarised. On the one hand academics such as Jongerden, Knapp (Jongerden and Knapp 2016) and Biel (Biel 2012) are quite positive about the trajectory of Rojava in outlining the political structures that follow from Abdullah Öcalan's (the nominal leader of the PKK) reading of Bookchin and its implementation in northern Syria. On the other hand, academics such as Saed (Saed 2017), and Leezenberg (Leezenburg 2016), though not dismissive of the project, caution against accepting Rojava as a simple reading off from libertarian municipalism. This is due, in part, to the heritage of the PKK as a Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey with a history of violent struggle with the Turkish state and ruling AKP party (see Yegen 2016). This has entailed a militarised politics lead very much by the PKK with Öcalan as its figure head in a manner contrary to the de-centred anarchism of Bookchin (Leezenburg 2016:673). The project is thus constrained by its actual circumstances and particular history of conflict with the Turkish state and embroilment in the civil war in Syria and should be read as a partial example of what might be possible as a politics of acknowledged dependence.

across the region formed from three separate cantons (Cezire, Kobane and Afrin). The political structures of the region are formed from communes in which all households are invited to participate. These communes comprise of neighbourhoods varying in size from 7-100 households (Knapp Jongerden 2016:98). Communes come together to form quarter councils and quarter councils come together periodically to form city councils in which decisions are made based upon a combination of consensus and voting (Knapp, Jongerden 2016:98). Furthermore, in terms of the organisation of projects and resolving issues such as defence, the communes have taken up committee models with members determined by the communes themselves (Knapp, Jongerden 2016:101). Communes also have public meeting spaces/ events termed *Mala gels* where public business can be discussed, and issues resolved (Knapp, Jongerden 2016:100). In such a way politics within the communes is very much a face to face deliberative event with political authority flowing up from the communes and the communes engaged in shared practices. Such a model does seem to echo MacIntyre's in so far as deliberation is face to face and the justice of the *Mala gels* is that of those communities.

Secondly, in terms of these shared practices, in a Rojavan context, the economy is based mainly on community production and large-scale cooperatives (Dicle 2013). Most cooperatives are primarily agricultural or light manufacturing and Rojava is largely self-sufficient in terms of food supply being a relatively productive region of Syria (Mober 2016:29). Currently, these cooperatives represent about one third of the industrial enterprises of Rojava (Mober 2016:29). The cooperatives then are both economic and political entities, with their own worker's councils, and so there is little centralised planning with most production being aimed at subsistence or in sustaining

the war effort against ISIS (Mober 2016:28). Furthermore, money lending, certainly publicly, is rare due, historically, to a lack of, banks in the region and a general regard for usury as immoral (Mober 2016:30). These features are in keeping with MacIntyre's notion that politics and practices are best conducted at the level of the community and directed by that community with minimal distortion by markets or state. It also means that the ecological impact of Rojava may be relatively small and this is helped by the attention in the constitution to ecology.<sup>16</sup> However, as Mober notes, this is also due to the historical underdevelopment of northern Syria and to the situation of war that has hindered international trade (Mober 2016:30). It is important to note that the small but significant main export of Rojava is petrol, the revenue from which largely goes towards equipping militia fighters.

As such, it remains to be seen how the Rojavan economy will develop at such time as the conflict ends. The caveat here is that it appears that the Rojavan project has, in part, been driven by the PKK, and that the personality of the imprisoned Abdullah Öcalan appears to bear on the impetus behind sustaining the project. What can be said from the literature is that the aim of the Rojavan region of northern Syria is the peaceful cohabitation of a plurality of ethnic and linguistic communities within a confederation through grass roots level communes and committees. The political structure of Rojava, inspired by Öcalan's democratic confederalism, in turn in large part influenced by Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, aims to establish an egalitarian democratic society with deliberation at the centre of its politics. This has been underpinned by a social contract explicitly setting out these values, promising an

---

<sup>16</sup> Article 23b of the Rojava constitution for example states: 'Everyone has the right to life which is commensurate with the environmental balance in the community' (Social contract of Rojava 2014 accepted March 2016).

education for all and the participation of youth in deliberation and through the implementation of positive measures such as requiring 40% of city councils to be female (Rojava Social Contract 2016).<sup>17</sup> Rojava then is expressly a confederation of communities and their assemblies, rather than a centralised state. In such a way, individuals taking part in local deliberation within and amongst communities engaged in shared practices are able to shape the character of those communities, with their constitution highlighting the need to respect their environment.

Rojava demonstrates, to an extent, the re-embedding of the economy in society through the emergence of workers cooperatives. Such cooperatives resemble MacIntyre's social structures of acknowledged dependence in that individuals are able to engage in shared projects with their communities. Furthermore, Rojava provides exemplification of a politics of acknowledged dependence in that face to face deliberation at the local scale is reconnecting people with a concern for the environment at the collective political level, expressed through the constitution of Rojava.

### ***Tar Sands protests in Northern America***

My second, though very different, example of a politics of acknowledged dependence can be found in the continuing protests against the extraction and dissemination of hydrocarbons from tar sands by indigenous peoples in North America. This is the latest in an ongoing conflict in determining the relationship between First Nations and the Canadian state and of titles and rights pertaining to land in North America. Most

---

<sup>17</sup> Janet Biehl a feminist green political theorist and a very close colleague of Bookchin's has been heavily involved in the Rojava 'project' and has been helping to push forward a strong feminist ethos.

recently this was very publicly seen in the 2012 rise of the 'Idle No More' movement and its organisation of peaceful direct action against the state apparatus supporting the extraction of oil in Canada.<sup>18</sup> The movement was largely centred around indigenous groups' outrage at the passing of Bill C-45 '*The Jobs and Growth act*' in 2012.

The Bill was deemed by many First Nations to ignore a large number of Aboriginal treaty rights. Principally, the Bill saw the federal government stepping back from its oversight of major waterways, of removing the need for environmental assessment of minor projects, constrained legal challenges to work carried out under the *National Energy Board Act*, and finally allowed the leasing of reserve lands with reduced community support and consultation required to re-designate land. Though in effect this is a stepping back of the state, much of this underpinned the expansion of the Northern Gateway Pipeline project. Hence, the project very much resembles the description of neoliberalism in chapter 2 with large corporate entities filling the role of the state. The pipeline project is designed to transport tar sands oil west from the Athabasca Basin to the Pacific coast for export to China and the US, all with its own associated harms to the regional and global environment (Le Billon and Vandercasteyen 2015:1).

In this instance, unlike the cantons of Rojava, pre-existing and new communities have coalesced around defending themselves and their environment from this large-scale export and processing of tar/oil sands hydrocarbons from Alberta. This export has been facilitated through neoliberal deregulation of environmental

---

<sup>18</sup> For a fuller explanation of Idle No More's organising principles and aims see <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>



controls with the consequence of the state's active promotion of regional scale hydrocarbon extraction (See Preston 2013). I shall focus on First Nations communities and how they expound a politics of acknowledged dependence, shown in part through the Idle No More movement.

It can certainly be said that the politics of these indigenous communities is one of critical orientation to the Canadian state.<sup>19</sup> Yet it is also a politics that promotes democracy through legal challenges to state activities, such as environmental impact assessments, as well as through elements of the structure of their political movements. Within the First Nations communities, there are a plethora of different tribal groupings that often interact with the Canadian state, in legal challenges, sometimes pressed through their respective chiefs. In the case of the Idle No More movement there was a conscious effort by First Nations to develop a grassroots protest rather than a top down, hierarchically led, movement. To quote the website, 'We [the members] are the leaders!' (Meekis 2013). In her study of the movement, Grace Li Xiu Woo notes that, '...this places the idle no more movement at odds with Euro-American traditions that seek heroes and give Canadian society a vertical structure' (Woo 2013:13). Woo also notes that there is a range of stances within first nations towards the state where chiefs within the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) are, '...willing to work with existing structures' i.e. the Canadian state, whilst some very notable first nations groups such as the Haudenosaunee and large numbers of Kanienkehaka have, '...a long history of asserting political independence' (Woo

---

<sup>19</sup> There is a wealth of study into first nation resistance to the Canadian state and what was seen as a process of assimilation of first nations into Canada during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries see for example (Nichols 1998:chapter 11) for a summary of First Nations organisation for self determination since the second world war; (Miller 2004:chapter4) for a review of First Nation's resistance to assimilation by the Canadian state since 1830; likewise Cairns 200:Chapter 4) as well as (Frideires and Gadacz 2001: chapter 12) amongst many other studies of First Nations protest movements in Canada.

2013:14) with many abstaining from voting in Canadian elections. There a plethora of different tribal groups and individuals involved in the movement, though rather than strictly formal voting and political organisation, as in Rojava, the Idle No More movement organises through deliberation, often on-line and in teach in's, about First Nations claims and identity. As such, in the case of the Idle No More movement, a decentralised, grassroots political movement sought to actively resist the Canadian state's co-optation of land for resource extraction.

In line with a politics of acknowledged dependence, First Nations in North America demonstrate shared practices and beliefs that acknowledge their widest interdependence with each other and nature. One such belief and practice is that of *wîhkôhtowin* (See Auger et al 2016:9). This is an all-encompassing Cree concept of kinship and shared reciprocity with ancestors and the land that entails careful stewardship of the environment and is also represented through shared ritual at key times of the year (Westman 2013:220, Woo 2013). Westman describes the *wîhkôhtowin* as a 'redistributive ritual complex' that is orchestrated to bring smaller bands together in solidarity (Westman 2013:219). A large part of the symbolic content of the ritual is not just bringing people together but also an appreciation of non-human nature and a celebration of the relationship between spirits, plants, animals and humans. In such a way the acknowledgement of interdependence is an integral part of Cree community. This is particularly prescient here as it is these communities within the Athabasca basin who are attempting to resist the negative externalities of tar sands extraction.

There is clearly much more that could be said and clarified by further study of First Nations resistance to the exploitation of the environment in Canada. For now, as

with the Rojavan example, it will have to suffice, initially, to conclude that these communities do exhibit some of the important features of a politics of acknowledged dependence in resisting environmentally harmful practices of neoliberalism. Though the First Nations protest against oil sands exploitation clearly does not contain the same overtly deliberative structures as those of Rojava, inspired by Bookchin's libertarian municipalism, they do implicitly draw upon an inclusive discourse put out across social media and expressed in the Canadian courts. The First Nations communities, though various in form, are small scale communities of bands who, in some cases, come together in shared practices such as the *wîhkôhtowin* to explicitly acknowledge their interdependence. In such a way they resemble MacIntyre's model of small scale local communities in which interdependence is acknowledged. Furthermore, they are actively engaged in resisting the exploitation of natural resources in a way that seeks to reinstate the values and practices of their communities over those of the neoliberal state. It remains to be seen whether there are other examples of such a politics and to test the credentials of those above. A suggestive area to look would be the development of the 15M and Indignados movement in Spain as well as the Nuit de bout movement in France 2016. However, space demands now turning to some conclusions from this chapter.

## ***Conclusion***

MacIntyre's construction of a politics of acknowledged dependence points in the direction of a decentring of political deliberation and economic practice. This decentred deliberative politics is important for greens as MacIntyre shows that it is through face to face deliberation and engagement in shared practices at the local level

that our understanding of our interdependence is cultivated and represented. I have argued that for greens this means a politics in which our interdependence with our environment is acknowledged is that conducted at the local deliberative level. Furthermore, the local level is the area in which much resistance to the more environmentally destructive aspects of neoliberalism is often grounded.

MacIntyre's thought on the state and markets concurs with significant elements of green thought such as the social ecology and libertarian municipalism of Murray Bookchin. I have also argued that MacIntyre's critical stance toward the state is more widely important for greens. The neoliberal state is an institution that sits remotely from the localised politics of acknowledged dependence. Both Bookchin and MacIntyre's criticism of the development of the use of the state by the left to manage populations and promote particular conceptions of the good is just as valid for the neoliberal state that promotes the individualism and consumption underlying the market. Furthermore, MacIntyre's argument entails that in order to avoid this manipulation of populations to the ends of a few elites a path of decentred deliberative politics is a better path to follow.

Significantly, it is MacIntyre's advocacy of local deliberative politics in tandem with his focus on the acknowledgement of dependence and our fundamentally vulnerable nature which makes his work attractive from a green perspective. It is this acknowledgement of dependence and vulnerability tied to an advocacy of local deliberative politics that MacIntyre adds to green political thought. To advocate a local politics and practice, as MacIntyre does, is not to naïvely promote pre-modern forms of life but rather to advocate self-conscious forms of organisation that enable individuals to engage meaningfully in politics and economic activity. These forms of

organisation are indeed inspired by those that previously resisted their own domination by the expansion of capital and concomitant forms of managerialism. However, they serve as indicators for what is possible, now, in a politics that actively challenges environmentally destructive practices. I have shown that not only are MacIntyre's ideas relevant to greens, but they are, to a degree, actually seen in explicit examples such as Bookchin's libertarian municipalism and the cantons of Rojava, and in the resistance to environmental degradation by Indigenous peoples in North America.

A final point for greens to draw from MacIntyre's politics of acknowledged dependence is that such a politics is neither one of eco-spiritualism turning inwards and focusing only on cultural and individual change nor is it one that seeks a whole scale greening of society through the state. Rather, a politics of acknowledged dependence is one where people act and deliberate together in their various communities to resist harms both to their environments and to promote the interests of those with whom they are interdependent. It is thus a politics of localised active resistance. Granted, all this may seem difficult to achieve in the face of hydrocarbon dependence and the entrenchment of neoliberalism in political, social and economic life. But there is something to be said for being utopian in one's political outlook; normative visions and ideal alternative models have always driven movements for social change. It is time for the ecology movement to reflect and draw upon its earlier visionary roots along side turning outward and advocating more politically, socially and ecologically sensitive practices which challenge neoliberalism

## Conclusion

### ***MacIntyre and green political thought***

I have claimed that Alasdair MacIntyre's call for considering the self as fundamentally interdependent with others, coupled with his notion of decentralised deliberative politics, should be synthesized with the arguments of ecologism. In so doing the ontological arguments of eco-centric thinkers can be re-politicised and brought to bear as a more socially and ecologically sensitive alternative to neoliberalism. For greens, adopting MacIntyre's approach entails a decentralized deliberative approach to politics in order to facilitate the development and expression of acknowledged dependence by individuals and to stand as an alternative to the abstract global structures of neoliberalism. Finally, I have responded to criticisms of MacIntyre's limited and incomplete suggestions of a politics of acknowledged dependence by considering Murray Bookchin's similar, but more fully developed, libertarian municipalist approach from within green political thought and the contemporary examples of the cantons of Rojava in Northern Syria and the 'Idle No More' movement against tar sands extraction in Canada.

In the first chapter, I argued that a particular form of green political thought - 'ecologism' (See Dobson 2000, Baxter 1999) - is amenable to a synthesis with communitarianism, with which MacIntyre is associated. Ecologism argues that the self is interrelated with the natural environment and is capable of acknowledging broader interests than its own. A strong current of philosophy at the root of ecologism is eco-centric in that it acknowledges entities within the environment are materially and psychologically interrelated with one another. It is important to look back to these eco-centric arguments as they posed as an alternative to the detached individualism of neoliberalism which has only entrenched itself since the start of the century in western democracies. Ecologism's ontological argument about the self, particularly those of Naess, Fox and Mathews, resembles the communitarian

conception of the socially embedded self. However, unlike communitarian arguments, they are focused largely on the psychology of the self and personal identification rather than linked to wider collective political engagement. Eco-centric argument should look to a politics in which the self can identify with concerns other than its own as part of its own interests and to political structures that allow space for these interests to be represented and to actively shape society. Thus, I argue that, like MacIntyre, greens should embrace deliberative forms of democracy as a way of looking out to reconnect with and challenge the environmental and social erosion of neoliberalism. Therefore, I affirm that ontological argument should be coupled with arguments for deliberative democratic politics.

In the second chapter, I moved on to examine the particular criticisms that green political thought has of deontological liberal theory and neoliberalism as the form of political economy that is currently hegemonic in the west. The chapter addressed the need to avoid setting up a straw man argument in claiming that the self of neoliberalism was atomistic and that liberal thought excluded substantive debate about the good. Examining the arguments of green liberals such as Marcel Wissenburg I conceded that social forms of liberalism, with which some elements of communitarianism are often rightly grouped, did indeed contain more relational ontologies and conceptions of democracy which were about the pursuit of the good life, particularly in the thought of J.S. Mill. However, I argued that these were not the contemporary forms of liberalism that are currently prevalent in practice. Whilst these green liberal theories could address liberal theory, in practice, we are actually confronted with neoliberalism founded on its conception of the self as individual consumer and concerned chiefly with the production of capital surplus.

My contention is that what is required is a more emancipatory critique, found within some aspects of communitarianism. The communitarianism of Alasdair MacIntyre significantly addresses ontological arguments as well as suggesting an alternative form of political economy that is decentred, deliberative and with economic practices rooted in community, in a way which supplements these ontological arguments. Chapter two then turned to examine

communitarian arguments for the consideration of relational ontologies in political thought and for an alternative conception and, most importantly, practice of politics and economics. Having reaffirmed the commonalities and differences between communitarianism and ecological thought, I argued that the fact that some elements of communitarianism contain ideas for alternative forms of democratic practice which challenge neoliberal hegemony make communitarianism favourable to a synthesis with ecological political thought. In particular, I claimed that the thought of Alasdair MacIntyre, who argues for a relational ontology which considers the self as fundamentally interdependent with others in tandem with making suggestions for deliberative democratic practices which facilitate the acknowledgement of this fundamental condition, is suggestive of a more ecologically and socially sensitive political economy than neoliberalism.

Following from these arguments, I showed that some green political theorists have looked to communitarianism for conceptual resources. Here I gave the example of Robyn Eckersley's work (see Eckersley 2006). Eckersley argues in favour of a place-based sense of empathy as the basis for reasons to care for the environment. Whilst in agreement with Eckersley that such a notion can in part explain the motivation for the self to care about the environment in deliberation, MacIntyre's communitarianism could also offer a way of thinking about the environment which includes, but moves beyond, personal place-based identification as a way of thinking about environmental concerns in political decision making. I contend that this is necessary in order to effectively politicise these arguments concerning the self and its attachments by connecting them to political practices that can effect collective change. I then discussed MacIntyre's notion of the human self as a dependent rational animal and the virtue of acknowledged dependence that flows from this understanding (MacIntyre 1999) and suggested that this notion of dependence opens up an opportunity to engage with broader norms regarding the way in which we collectively interact with the environment. In so doing I returned to show how ecologism, certain wider areas of green political thought, and MacIntyre advocate deliberative forms of democracy. For MacIntyre, this advocacy stems from a desire



for selves to represent their interests and publicly shape their communities. For greens and eco-centric thinkers, it is to give voice to environmental concerns where issues arise at the local level and to increase the accountability of elites and corporations whose practices may be environmentally destructive. I suggested that MacIntyre's argument about the virtues of acknowledged dependence could be brought into ecological thought, to frame the way selves think about and represent the environment in deliberation.

In the final chapter, I turned again to MacIntyre to examine the strengths and weaknesses of his arguments for a politics of acknowledged dependence and to develop his suggestions for social and political change from a green perspective. The chief aim of the chapter, and indeed the thesis, was to establish an outline of a green politics of acknowledged dependence. In doing so I considered MacIntyre's argument for decentralized deliberative communities of practice as the sites of resistance to neoliberal hegemony and development of more ecologically and socially sensitive practices. I argued that MacIntyre's focus on the local is neither naïve nor romantic especially when we consider his suggestions in the wider context of his work. In fact, MacIntyre's arguments for a deliberative democratic politics necessarily entail local forms of deliberative democracy rather than state-based pursuit of the good life. This was especially important as MacIntyre explicitly differentiates himself from other communitarians in not taking a view of politics in which the state or representative democracies at the level of the state, shape the good life. Rather, for MacIntyre, local forms of democracy are required to enable local forms of deliberation about decentralized forms of practices. As such his conception of democracy is tied to a conception of socio-economic practice as being properly socially driven by the goals of individuals within their communities rather than state or capital.

In the final chapter, I argued that MacIntyre's suggestion of a localist politics is not as utopian as it may appear. However, a green politics of acknowledged dependence remained largely to be fleshed out as his examples of local communities of shared practices were too brief and thus vulnerable to criticisms of being parochial and overly sentimentalising pre-

modern forms of life. I defended MacIntyre's valuing of the local as the site of deliberation and thus acknowledgement of dependence through reference to his own argument that deliberation at the level of the state has tended to distort any sort of acknowledgement of interdependence largely in favour of representative elites and large corporations. Furthermore, following MacIntyre's line of argument, I argued that decentred deliberation represented an opportunity to both devolve decision making closer to individuals who could express their interdependence and to ground the economy back into social control. This conception of a localised, deliberative democracy could thus stand as an alternative to the remotely controlled markets of neoliberalism with little democratic control over global systems of production and consumption. Whilst this may still seem utopian I argued that it was, in fact, possible to see a green form of the politics of acknowledged dependence in three different areas. Firstly, the libertarian municipalism of Murray Bookchin echoes the local deliberative democracy of MacIntyre in that both are concerned with deliberation and relocating politics to the local level as a way of counteracting the dominance of neoliberalism and its more socially and environmentally destructive aspects. Secondly, I argued that such a politics was, in part, being lived out in Rojava in Northern Syria in its radical project of decentralized democracy and production as a way of empowering and including a culturally heterogeneous population at a time of conflict. I argued that in the west such a green politics of acknowledged dependence could be seen in the 'Idle No More' movement of First Nations against the tar sands exploitation in the Athabasca Basin of Canada. Again, the movement exhibits grassroots democratic and deliberative forms as well as cultures that actively acknowledge their interdependence on each other and nature. These examples serve to demonstrate that a politics of acknowledged dependence is possible and that such a politics is sensitive to ecological concerns.

## ***MacIntyre, ecologism and ontology***

Ontological argument about the self is a key area in which ecologism and communitarianism converge. This is particularly the case where MacIntyre has argued for people to be thought of as fundamentally vulnerable and thus fundamentally dependent. In bringing an ecological perspective to bear on MacIntyre's argument the self can be thought of as embedded within both social and ecological relationships. That is, to refer to MacIntyre specifically, not only is the self interdependent with its human community it is also interdependent with its environment. I am not concerned so much to defend the 'rightness' of these ontological claims. What is important for my purposes is that they clearly stand in opposition to the neoliberal self. Communitarians, eco-centric thinkers, and especially eco-feminists, are critical of the atomistic ontology of neoliberalism because it assumes a self that is able to think and reason without taking its particular constitutive attachments into account. Communitarians have argued that the self in neoliberal politics is denied reflection upon the concerns of the community to which it is attached. Thus, the neoliberal self is concerned with its own narrow self-interest rather than seeing its own self-interests as bound up with the communities of which it is a part. Similarly, eco-centric thinkers also suggest that the neoliberal self is narrowly self-interested and concerned primarily with its own short-term material needs; any sense of wider and longer-term attachments to nature are often ignored at the substantive level. These are assumptions that have continued to prevail in both theory and practice to the detriment of alternatives.

Green liberal thinkers have rightly argued that liberalism too is amenable to a type of self which is more relational and open to acknowledging interests wider than its own. However, I have argued that neoliberalism is the dominant form of liberalism at present and that it is defined through deontological thinking and a fundamental commitment to economic growth and capital acquisition in which the individual as consumer or service user is very much valorised. Thus, I have argued that it is still necessary to continue to look to

communitarian thinkers, and MacIntyre in particular, for arguments which promote a relational ontology not just in political thought but also in practice. This is where, I argue, MacIntyre's thought stands apart from other communitarians. His argument suggests both an alternative ontological perspective on the self, and an alternative political practice that, when synthesized with ecological arguments about ontology and deliberation, offers a greener, more socially aware, praxis than neoliberalism.

However, it would seem that ecologism and communitarianism are at odds when it comes to considering nature. Communitarianism relies on an anthropocentric ontology. Its self is human, and its attachments are to people. Ecologism refers to the self's attachments to nature and non-human selves but is missing an explanation as to how these attachments affect collective decision making. In *Dependent Rational Animals* (MacIntyre 1999) appears to bring ecologism and communitarianism together. By talking about the fundamentally vulnerable and dependent nature of human beings, MacIntyre's conception of the self echoes that of the self in ecologism. In such a way this synthesis represents an enlightened anthropocentric approach. By this I mean the self is not subsumed within an ecological or social whole rather it is interrelated with both its human community and the environment. The self, its community and the environment may all act upon and shape one another. In this conception, the self is seen as the valuing agent who has to account for itself and its relationships in political deliberation.

MacIntyre's is an ontology which proposes that it is the human self which appreciates its vulnerabilities and dependencies, rather than value being located intrinsically in nature, and the human self that then accounts for these interdependencies. The human self is still not displaced from the centre of the ethical picture. However, such an ontology should encourage us to reflect upon how we think of others and our environments in political deliberation. A self who appreciates that they are in important ways embedded and who is capable of appreciating the interests of others and their role in supporting them i.e., acknowledging their

interdependence, may then be able to consider their dependencies seriously when reflecting on political decisions.

At this point, it will be contended that such an ontology is essentialist. Certainly, to the degree that it refers to our basic needs and dependencies by virtue of our vulnerable and dependent nature it may be thought of as such. Furthermore, this is why many theorists have of late turned away from ontological arguments in favour of post-modern anti-foundational approaches. Therefore, it is necessary to argue further, as MacIntyre does, that dependent selves must be able to first support each other in being able to reason *independently* through nurture and education. Then in coming together collectively to reason and debate the ordering of goods and character of society itself individuals can shape their society. In such a way, whilst talking about the self as dependent and rational may well be essentialist, presenting the self as formed reflexively, within the deliberative communities which they can themselves shape, moves away from a crude biological determinism. In coming to reason and being able to participate in shaping their communities individuals do not overcome entirely their essential vulnerability rather they are able to act despite this vulnerability because others have supported them in doing so. Another response is to say that to abandon ontological argument would be to leave neoliberalism to dominate economic, social and political thought and practice. This leaves the radically autonomous ecologically disembodied individual unchallenged. As eco-feminist theorists such as MacGregor (2006) have noted, this lack of alternatives and challenges to the dominance of neoliberal thinking needs to be remedied.

I argue that what MacIntyre's thought brings to the field of green political thought is both an ontological alternative to the individuals of neoliberalism coupled with a formulation for how such embedded individuals could express their concern for others. Such a position is in line with Barry (2012, 2013) and Hannis's (2016) identification of MacIntyre's notions of vulnerability and dependence as challenging arrogant anthropocentrism and as a way of thinking about framing green political thought in neo-Aristotelian terms. It certainly echoes that of eco-feminists such as Mellor (1997) and MacGregor (2006) that the self should be

thought of as embodied rather than ecologically disembodied. However, what I have also argued is that MacIntyre's ontological arguments link in directly to an argument for decentralised deliberative political structures through which these embedded selves can learn about and express their interdependence.

### ***MacIntyre, ecologism and deliberative democracy***

So, in this thesis, I have sought to show that both ecologism and MacIntyre advocate forms of deliberative democracy in order to foster individual, social and ecological flourishing. In linking MacIntyre and ecologism I have argued in favour of decentralized deliberative democracy. This is because MacIntyre and other communitarians such as Sandel present a view of politics as a debate about the ordering of goods and the character of society. Ecologism, when connected to deliberative democracy, may also present itself as a position that advocates a debate over the good life. Ecologism can be connected to democracy through Dobson's argument that democracy has been a precondition for eco-centric values to emerge and that deliberative democracy is a way of further elucidating the concerns of ecologism (Dobson 1996). Furthermore, I have argued that such democratic forms should be both deliberative and decentralized if we are to follow MacIntyre's concerns of re-embedding political and economic practice within society in a way which we can acknowledge and express our interdependence.

MacIntyre's aims overlap with those of ecologism in the sense that both wish for selves to shape the character of their societies in some substantive way. MacIntyre desires to see individuals participating in decentralized deliberation so that they can contribute to an ongoing debate as to the prioritization of goods in their community. In so doing individuals as citizens reflect on their dependencies in political deliberation. These individuals act in acknowledgement of their dependencies in order to shape their communities, to support those they depend on, and to support others in entering the political community to debate the meaning of goods. In so doing this type of individual is active in participating in a community

rather than the neoliberal conception of the individual whose concerns for the good life, and thus the character of their community, are largely relegated to the private sphere and inhibited in shaping public life.

Bringing MacIntyre and ecologism together reaffirms the view that green citizens are also active, or activist citizens, who speak out in representing their concerns about the environment (see also Barry 2012). Some green political theorists and eco-centric thinkers have advocated forms of decentralized deliberative democracy as a way of opening up democracy to environmental concerns (See Smith 2003, Dryzek 2009, Eckersley 2004). The notion is that increased deliberation and inclusion will allow green citizens to express their environmental concerns. An approach that draws on MacIntyre's thought endorses deliberative democracy as a way of enabling green citizens to shape the character of their community towards one which is more attuned to its dependence upon a vulnerable environment. The nature of deliberation means that the way in which individuals acknowledge their dependence will change over time and that individual differences over how individuals see the environment will be inevitable.

However, this is not to debilitate deliberative democracy rather it presents a forum that, when structured properly to mitigate inherent imbalances of power using features such as democratic agenda setting and independent facilitation of discussion citizens, can move towards an understanding of one another or confluence (Kadlec and Freidman 2007). In such deliberation, participants defend their views about the environment to one another, much as MacIntyre's proxies defend their representation of individuals in communitarian deliberation. Such confluence of views, in which participants deliberate about clearly delineated and differing futures (Gunnerson-Ostling 2014), can also be framed by participants' acknowledged dependence. Such a debate between citizens about differing potential outcomes reflects the communitarian notion that deliberation should be about the good life and the ordering of different goods within communities. This deliberative democracy is preferable to contemporary neoliberal democracy as it stands at present because selves deliberate over

different and competing conceptions of nature and the future based on their acknowledged interdependence. This opens up political deliberation and decision making to wider considerations of nature other than that of a resource for consumption and appropriation.

I have argued that eco-centric thinkers and MacIntyre have arguments specifically in favour of decentralised deliberative forms of democracy. For MacIntyre, this is because of a wish to re-enfranchise individuals within communities in making decisions that affect the community as a whole. In ecological terms localised forms of deliberation and decision-making have been advocated as a way of taking decisions close to the environments and people who will be affected by those decisions. Further, decentralized deliberative democracy has been advocated as a way of opening up the debating chambers of contemporary liberal democracies that eco-centric political thinkers see as antagonistic to their aims to respect the environment and its entities beyond that of simply a resource for appropriation.

For both MacIntyre and ecologism, democracy is also about individuals coming together to decide on the character of their communities as opposed to leaving issues of the good up to individuals in the private sphere, treating them as private preferences. And so, it would seem both theories have much to offer each other. MacIntyre's notion of acknowledged dependence is important because it can frame the debate within political discourse at the face-to-face level. Here individuals may express their concerns, acknowledging their dependence on each other and their environment, and call into question practices that fail to treat entities within the environment with just generosity. At the face-to-face, local level our interdependencies are best felt and learnt by citizens entering into debate and decision-making. The likelihood of generating greener outcomes from deliberation is increased, therefore, if those green citizens engaging in deliberation have internalised the virtues of acknowledged dependence in deliberation. A synthesis drawing on MacIntyre suggests that deliberation is carried out close to the point of felt connection to the environment but also framed by the notion of acknowledged dependence so as to ensure a level of care for the environment and others within the community such as future generations, the disabled and



the elderly. This approach blends the notion of ourselves as 'always already' constituted through our community and environments with the advocacy of a deliberative system. A system that is open to admitting this notion whilst preserving the democratic idea that individuals be enabled in shaping their communities, as their communities, including their environments, shape themselves.

Furthermore, and most importantly, in the face of a hegemonic neoliberalism, drawing on MacIntyre's work reaffirms the need for alternative forms of political and economic practice that enable the acknowledgement of our interdependencies. In also prompting greens to think again about the ontology of the embedded self in tandem with suggesting decentralised deliberative political, social, and economic structures that enable selves to acknowledge and express their interdependence is where MacIntyre's arguments stand out from others; both of a liberal green and communitarian variety.

### ***What insights does MacIntyre offer ecologism?***

So, in answer to the question 'what conceptual insights do communitarians, and in particular MacIntyre, offer greens?' my response is as follows. Greens, specifically eco-centric thinkers, are right to argue that political theory should take into consideration ontology when constructing political argument. In such a way they may be able to argue for a politics in which the self and its behaviours are as much a public project as a private one. I have argued that it is possible to put the ontological constructions of ecologism usefully back into conversation with other political theories. In referring to deliberative democratic structures Arias-Maldonado (2005) argues that deliberation without a normative framing may not lead to green outcomes and cautions against simply accepting that deliberative structures alone will do the job of promoting ecologically sensitive results. I argue that the virtues of acknowledged dependence, as conceived by MacIntyre, could frame deliberation. From an ecological perspective, in focusing on the virtues of acknowledged dependence those involved in deliberation, acting as

proxies who must account for their view of nature, are encouraged to consider their interdependence with the environment. In such a way, decisions that affect the environment are at least seen as political decisions which affect everyone as opposed to simply technical problems for experts and administrators.

In returning ontological discussion of the self to political thought, MacIntyre is keeping alive the prospect that politics is about the communal shaping of society and its general character, against a neoliberalism which argues largely that the self is a private project with its behaviours and character formed independently of its community. In keeping up the argument that ontology is important to politics, greens and communitarians can keep open the possibility of the self continually shaping the community which in turn shapes the self. This includes consideration of those selves who feel closeness to nature and a concern for long-term sustainability alongside those selves who are concerned with the growth of gross domestic product and the price of commodities. We began with Michael Sandel, and we can end with him:

Take climate change. Yes, there are conventional arguments about intergenerational justice. Let me grant you that. Really to deal with the problem of the politics that will deal ultimately with climate change will be a politics, I suspect, that changes the wanton and profligate attitudes we have toward the natural world and toward the environment as well as toward future generations' enjoyment of it. I have a hunch - and this is only a hunch - about the way politics in democratic societies play themselves out, and I suppose it's also a hunch about how important, eventful movements of social and political reform take place. They take place when people are persuaded by their circumstance and by the arguments and debates they hear around them, about the need to question and change their attitudes and their ways of life. And I think that the politics of the environment, maybe more clearly than any

other politics we confront today, requires a more ambitious engagement with what the good life is and how we should regard our relation to the planet we share. (Sandel 2009:15)

Sandel's comments are indicative of the possibilities of an eco-communitarian synthesis. He offers the notion, shared by many green and eco-centric political theorists, that, within democratic societies, sustainable change in our relationship to our environments may come about when people are persuaded by 'arguments and debates that they hear around them' which open the way to a questioning of our general orientation towards nature and the non-human world. Sandel feels that environmental politics requires, '...a more ambitious engagement with what the good life is and how we should regard our relation to the planet we share'. I agree with him, and in this thesis, I have contributed to this engagement by demonstrating the conceptual insights which MacIntyre can offer ecologism in bringing about the 'more ambitious engagement' with the good life to which Sandel refers.

Ecologism would do well to follow MacIntyre's lead of arguing for political deliberation to be about the good of communities. A politics that is about the common good is a politics which keeps alive the possibility of a collectively reflective approach to the general nature of society and its relationships with the wider environment and entities within it. It is a possibility, when linked strongly to participation, that individuals can debate the attitude of their communities towards differing features and scenarios within the world. As eco-centric thinkers describe it, environmental problems stem from the character of society itself more than from the threats and risks of the external non-human world. They, therefore, need to argue for a type of politics in which the general character of society can be debated and be up for review by all who participate in that society. The nature of our society, therefore, should be up for debate at the substantive political level, and not relegated to private conversation and action, so that there is a possibility of more sustainable interrelationships with wider nature being collectively realised without large, powerful, private interests undermining and

overriding such consideration. This approach to political theory puts ecologism at odds with neoliberal political thought. However, I argue that MacIntyre's arguments supply reasons for individuals to act on behalf of their environments as we are interdependent with them as much as the entities within these environments are interdependent with each other and ourselves. This eco-centric view, that echoes throughout many of the theorists examined in this thesis, can be accommodated and is indeed supported, by MacIntyre's perspective on politics. Our nature, as interdependent with our environments, is what supplies the motivation for individuals to act in politics to take others such as future generations and non-human entities into account. Without such a consideration, the arguments of greens in liberal debating chambers such as Westminster risk seeming like desires to impose arbitrary and unfair constraints on the private choices of the individuals administered by these institutions in an environment where concern for nature is often secondary to economic growth. I have, then, argued that a green deliberative approach which draws on MacIntyre's notion of acknowledged dependence sees all selves as having a stake in their communities and environments and argues for selves to be enfranchised in the light of them, rooted in an ontological understanding of the nested and mutually constitutive embeddedness of human selves and their environment.

Finally, I have argued that the synthesis between ecologism and MacIntyre's thought suggests an appropriate way to realise a political practice which considers the self as a collective and private project and a community as a project in which selves are involved in shaping their social, political and economic lives. This is a politics that is necessarily decentralised and deliberative so as to re-enfranchise selves and their constitutive communities; socially, economically and politically. Decentralisation, the locating of deliberation at the face-to-face level, is important as it allows selves who acknowledge and account for their dependent nature to shape political and economic decision-making. Viewing politics as decentralised deliberation is the corollary to seeing politics as a democratic debate over the good. I have argued that extrapolating from MacIntyre's arguments means accepting

that debate around the good and coordinating economic practices, which are part of this good, ought to take place at the local level. Deliberation between enfranchised individuals, who represent their concerns and attachments during political encounters, allows the possibility of collective learning, acknowledgement of the dependence of selves upon each other and their environments, and the shaping of communities with such considerations to be taken into account. Such a conception of social, political and economic practice, that draws on MacIntyre's acknowledged dependence, stands as both a theoretical and practical green alternative to the dominance of neoliberalism: one that is both socially and environmentally self-conscious.

Bookchin's arguments for locally scaled forms of deliberative assembly and modes of production rooted in these deliberative communities further extends MacIntyre's suggestions for a politics of acknowledged dependence in an ecological direction. In bringing the two together I would argue strongly in favour of looking back to these arguments for a different - more humanly and ecologically scaled - form of politics and economics. I would do so because it is necessary at a time when we in western democracies seem almost inextricably alienated both from the natural world with which we are dependent and from the practices which sustain us, to keep alive the possibilities of alternative ways of relating to each other and nature. The examples of Rojava and the Idle No More movement suggest that there is hope that such a decentralised deliberative politics of acknowledged dependence is possible and can make a difference in a world where more humane and ecologically sensitive alternatives to neoliberalism are greatly needed.

## Bibliography

- Achterberg, W. "Can Liberal Democracy Survive the Environmental Crisis: Sustainability, Liberal Neutrality and Overlapping Consensus", in Dobson, A. and Lucardie, P. (eds), *The Politics of Nature: Explorations in Green Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 1993): pp. 81-101
- Akkaya, A, H. and Jongerden, J. "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the project of Radical Democracy", in *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (2012) 14 pp. 1-18
- Alcoff, L, M. "The Case for Coherence" in Lynch, M. P, (ed), *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001): 159-182
- Arias-Moldanado, M. "Green Politics and deliberative democracy", Institute of International Studies Working Papers, Berkeley Workshop on Environmental Politics, WP 04-13 (The Berkeley Electronic Press, 2005)
- Baber W, F. and Bartlett, R, V. *Deliberative Environmental Politics* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005)
- Backstrand, K., Khan, J., Kronsell, A., Lovbrand, E. (eds), *Environmental Politics and Deliberative Democracy: Examining the Promise of New Modes of Govrnance* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2010)
- Ball, T. and Dagger, R. *Political Ideologies and The Democratic Ideal* (London: Pearson/Longman, 2009)
- Barry, J. *Rethinking Green Politics* (London: Sage, 1999)
- Barry, J. "Vulnerability and Virtue", in Minteer, B, A, and Pepperman Taylor, B, (eds), *Democracy and the Claims of Nature* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002): pp. 131-149

- Barry, J. *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability: Human Flourishing in a Climate-Changed, Carbon-Constrained World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Barry, J., MacIntyre and Havel as green political thinkers: Unreasonable thinking in turbulent times, In Leonard, L., *Environmental Philosophy: The Art of Life in a World of Limits*, Vol. 13 (Online: Emerald Group, 2013) pp. 1-29
- Bauman, Z. *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Oxford: Polity, 2001)
- Bell, D. *Communitarianism and its Critics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
- Bell, D. R. "How can Political Liberals be Environmentalists?" *Political Studies* 50:4 (2002) pp. 703-724
- Bell, D. R. "Communitarianism" in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Stanford University (Accessed 23/03/16)
- Bell, D. R. and Dobson, A. (eds.), *Environmental Citizenship*, (London: The MIT Press, 2006)
- Benton, T. *Natural Relations: Ecology, Animal Rights and Social Justice*, (London: Verso, 1993)
- Benton, T "Biology and Social Science Theory in the Environmental Debate", in Redclift, M. and Benton, T. (eds), *Social Theory and the Global Environment* (London: Routledge, 1994)
- Berlin, I. "Two Concepts of Liberty" in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969)
- Berleant, A. *Environmental Aesthetics*, (2012), published at <http://www.autograff.com/berleant/pages/Aesthetic%20Engagement-5.htm>, (accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015)
- Biehl J. *The Murray Bookchin Reader* (London: Cassel, 1997)

- Biehl J. "Bookchin, Öcalan, and the Dialectics of Democracy" speech given at conference *Challenging Capitalist Modernity—Alternative Concepts and the Kurdish Quest* 4.3, (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012) published at <http://networkaq.net/>, (accessed December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016)
- Blanke, H. T. "Domination and Utopia: Marcuse's Discourse on Nature, Psyche, and Culture" in Macauley, D. *Minding nature: The Philosophers of Ecology*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996) pp. 186-208
- Blühdorn, I. "Post-ecologism and the politics of simulation" in Levey, Y., Wissenburg, M., *Liberal Democracy and the Environment. The End of Environmentalism*, (London: Routledge, 2004) pp.35-47.
- Blühdorn, I. "The governance of unsustainability: ecology and democracy after the post-democratic turn" *Environmental Politics* 22:1, (2013) pp.16-36
- Bookchin, M. *Post Scarcity Anarchism*, (Berkeley: Rampart, 1971)
- Bookchin, M. *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982)
- Bookchin, M. "Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology" *Socialist Review* 88:3, (1988) pp.11-29
- Bookchin, M. *Remaking society*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989)
- Bookchin, M. *From Urbanization to Cities: Toward a New Politics of Citizenship*, (London: Cassell, 1995)
- Bourque, N., Auger, D. Whiskeyjack, L. Steinhauer, D. Melnyk-Poliakowski, C. and Steinhauer, S. *Indigenous Women's Economic Security and Wellbeing* (2016) published at [www.policywise.com](http://www.policywise.com), (accessed 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017)
- Bradley, K. and Hedrén, J. (eds.), *Green utopianism: perspectives, politics and micro-practices* (Vol. 2) (London: Routledge, 2014)



- Breen, K. "Alasdair MacIntyre and the hope for a politics of virtuous acknowledged dependence" *Contemporary Political Theory* 1:2 (2002) pp.181-201
- Breen, K. "Work and emancipatory practice: towards a recovery of human beings' productive capacities" *Res Publica* 13:4 (2007) pp.381-414
- Cairns, A, C. *Citizens Plus* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000)
- Calder, G. "Listening, Democracy and the Environment" *Spire: Journal of Law, Politics and Societies* 4:2 (2009) pp.26-41
- Callicott, J, B. "Hume's Is/Ought Dichotomy and the Relation of Ecology to Leopold's Land Ethic" *Environmental Ethics* 4 (1982) pp. 63–74.
- Capra, F. *The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (London: Flamingo, 1997)
- Carter, A. *A Radical Green Political Theory* (London: Routledge 1999)
- Carter, N. *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Cemgil, C. and Hoffmann, C. The 'Rojava Revolution' in *Syrian Kurdistan: A Model of Development for the Middle East? IDS Bulletin* 47:3 (2016)
- Connelly, J. "The Virtues of Environmental Citizenship", in Bell, D, and Dobson, A, (eds.) *Environmental Citizenship* (London: The MIT Press, 2006): pp.49-74
- Dalacoura, K. "A Critique of Communitarianism with Reference to Post-Revolutionary Iran" in *Review of International Studies* 28:1 (2002) pp.75-92
- De Geus, M. and Doherty, B. *Democracy and Green Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- De-Shalit, A. *The Environment Between Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Devall, B. and Sessions, G. *Deep Ecology* (Layton: Gibbs Smith, 1985)

- Dicle, A. "Political Structure of Rojava" Jadaliyya, published 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/14272/rojavas-political-structure> (accessed May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017)
- diZerega, G. "Empathy, Society, Nature and the Relational self", in *"The Ecological Community"*, ed. Gottlieb, R, S. (London: Routledge, 1997)
- Dobson, A. "Representative Democracy and the Environment", in Lafferty, W, M. And Meadowcroft, J. (eds.), *Democracy and the Environment* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996): pp. 124-139
- Dobson, A. *Green Political Thought*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Dobson, A. and Eckersley, R. *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Dobson, A. *Green Political Thought*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), (London: Routledge, 2008)
- Dobson, A. "Freedom and dependency in an environmental age" in *Social Philosophy and Policy* 26: 2 (2009) pp. 151-172
- Dobson, A. *Political Theory in a Closed World, Reflections on William Ophuls, Liberalism, and Abundance* (2013), published online at [www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/papers/Dobson.pdf](http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/papers/Dobson.pdf), (accessed 6<sup>th</sup> January 2013)
- Dryzek, J, S. *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy and Political Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Dryzek, J, S. "Political and Ecological Communication", *Environmental Politics* 4:4 (1995) pp. 13-36
- Dryzek, J, S. *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics and Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Dryzek, J, S. "Democracy and Earth System Governance", Paper presented at the Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change,

*Earth System Governance: People, Places and the Planet*, 2-4 December 2009, Online at: <http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org/ac2009/papers/AC2009-Dryzek.pdf> (accessed 28 December 2012)

- Dryzek, J. S. and Niemeyer, S. *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Eckersley, R. "Habermas and Green Political Thought", *Theory and Society* 19:6 (1990) pp. 739-776
- Eckersley, R. *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, (London: UCL Press, 1992)
- Eckersley, R. "Liberal Democracy and the Rights of Nature: The Struggle for Inclusion", *Environmental Politics* 4:4 (1996) pp. 169-196
- Eckersley, R. "Greening Liberal Democracy: The Rights Discourse Revisited", in Doherty B and de Geus M (eds), *Democracy and Green Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Eckersley, R. "Deliberative Democracy, Ecological Representation and Risk: Towards a Democracy of the Affected", in Saward, M. (ed.), *Democratic Innovation: Deliberation, Representation and Association* (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Eckersley, R. "Deliberative Democracy, Ecological Representation and Risk: Towards a democracy of the affected", in, Saward, M. (ed.), *Democratic Innovation: Deliberation, Representation and Association* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- Eckersley, R. *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (London: The MIT Press, 2004)
- Eckersley, R. "Communitarianism", in Dobson, A. and Eckersley, R. (ed.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 91-108

- Fox, W. *Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Totnes: Resurgence Book, 1994)
- Fox, W. "Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of our Time?" In Light, A. and Rolston III, H. *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) pp. 252-261
- Frazer, E. *The Problems of Communitarian Politics: Unity and Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Freudenburg, N. and Steinsapir, C. "Not in our Backyards: The Grassroots Environmental Movement", in, *Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*, 4:3 (1991) pp. 235-245
- Frideires, J, S. and Gadacz, R, R. *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001)
- Gabrielson, T. and Parady, K. "Corporeal Citizenship: Rethinking Green Citizenship through the Body", in *Environmental Politics*, 19:3 (2010) pp. 374-391
- Gibson-Graham, J, K., Cameron, J. and Healy, S. *Take back the economy: An ethical guide for transforming our communities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)
- Goodin, R, E. *Green Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992)
- Goodin, R, E. "Enfranchising the Earth, and its alternatives", in *Political Studies* 44:5 (1996) pp. 835-849
- Gray, J, N. "On Negative and Positive Liberty", *Political Studies* 28:4 (1980) pp. 507-654
- Gunnerson-Ostling, U. "Politicizing Planning through Multiple Images of the Future", in Bradley, K. and Hedren, J. *Green Utopianism: Perspectives, Politics and Micro-Practices* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) pp. 101-114
- Hailwood, S. *How to be a Green Liberal; Nature, Value and Liberal Philosophy* (Chesham: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004)

- Hajer, M. *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernisation and the Policy Process* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Hales, R. "The Rise of Individualism. The implications for promoting relations between self, others and the environment in outdoor education", *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 10:2 (2006) pp. 53-61
- Hardin, G. "The Tragedy of the Commons", in, *Science* 162:3859 (1968) pp. 1243-1248
- Harvey D. *A brief history of neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Hay, C. "Political Ontology", in Goodin, R. E. *The Oxford handbook of Political Science* Online: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp.460-476
- Hayward, B. "The Greening of Participatory Democracy", in *Environmental Politics* 4:4 (1995) pp. 215-234
- Hayward, T. *Political Theory and Ecological Values* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998)
- Hayward, T. "Environmental Rights as Democratic Rights", in Minteer, B. A, and Pepperman Taylor, B, (eds), *Democracy and the Claims of Nature* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002) pp. 237-256
- Held, D. "The transformation of Political Community: Rethinking Democracy in the Context of Globalisation", in Shapiro, I. and Hacker-Cordon, C. (eds), *Democracy's Edges*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 84-111
- Hosseini, A. "The Spirit of the Spiritless Situation: The Significance of Rojava as an Alternative Model of Political Development in the Context of the Middle East", *Critique*, 44:3 (2016) pp.253-265.
- Knapp, M. and Jongerden, J. Communal Democracy: The Social Contract and Confederation in Rojava, *Comparative Islamic Studies*, 10:1 (2014) pp. 87-109
- Knight, K. *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)
- "Idle no more", <http://www.idlenomore.ca/>, (accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017)

- Kadlec, A. and Freidman, W. "Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power", in *Journal of Public deliberation*, 1: 8 (2007) pp.1-26
- Kenis, A. and Lievens, M. *The limits of the green economy: From reinventing capitalism to re-politicising the present* (London: Routledge, 2016)
- Kennemore, A. and Weeks, G. Twenty-First Century Socialism? The Elusive Search for a Post-Neoliberal Development Model in Bolivia and Ecuador, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 30: 3 (2011) pp.267-281
- Kingsnorth, P. "Nimbys Are the True Democratic Heros", *New Statesman* 17, 805 (3<sup>rd</sup> May 2004) pp. 22-4
- Kukathas, C. Pettit, P. *Rawls: A theory of Justice and its Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990)
- Knight, K. *The MacIntyre Reader* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998)
- Knight, K. *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)
- Kymlica, W. *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)
- Kymlica, W. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Le Billon, P. and Vandecasteyen, R. "(Dis) Connecting Alberta's Tar Sands And British Columbia's North Coast", *Studies in Political Economy*, 91:1 (2013) pp.35-57
- Leezenberg, M. "The ambiguities of democratic autonomy: the Kurdish movement in Turkey and Rojava", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16:4 (2016) pp. 671-690
- Leopold, A. *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949)

- Linklater, A. "Cosmopolitanism", in Dobson, A. and Eckersley E. (eds) *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 109-127
- MacIntyre, A. *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), (Guildford: Duckworth, 1994)
- MacIntyre, A. "A Partial Response to my Critics" in Horton, J. and Mendus, S. *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994) pp. 283-304
- MacIntyre, A. "The Thesis on Feuerbach: A Road Not Taken" in Knight, K., *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998)
- MacIntyre, A. "Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good" in Knight, K. (ed), *The MacIntyre Reader*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998)
- MacIntyre, A. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Trowbridge: Duckworth, 1998)
- MacIntyre, A. *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtue*, (London: Duckworth, 1999)
- MacIntyre, A. and Dunne, J. "Alasdair MacIntyre on education: in dialogue with Joseph Dunne", *Journal of philosophy of education*, 36:1, (2002) pp.1-19
- MacIntyre, A. *Impoverished Moral Discourse, Insoluble Philosophical Problems: Three Lectures*, Delivered at the University of Essex (unpublished manuscript May 2003)
- MacIntyre, A. "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict", in MacIntyre, A, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- MacGregor, S. *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Politics of Care* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006)
- MacGregor, S. "Only Resist: Feminist Ecological Citizenship and the Post-politics of Climate Change", *Hypatia*, 29:3, (2014) pp.617-633

- MacGregor, S. "Ecological Citizenship", in Gabrielson, T., Hall, C., Meyer, J.M. and Schlosberg, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 107-132
- Magdoff, F. and Bellamy Foster J. *What every environmentalist needs to know about capitalism* (New York Monthly Review Press, 2011)
- Mathews, F. *The Ecological Self* (London: Routledge, 1994)
- Mathews, F. "Community and the Ecological Self", in Mathews F. (ed), *Ecology and Democracy* (London: Frank Cass, 1995)
- Mellor, M. "Eco-feminism and eco-socialism: Dilemmas of essentialism and materialism", *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 3:2, (1992) pp.43-62
- Mellor, M. *Feminism and Ecology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997)
- Merchant, C. *The Death of Nature; Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983)
- Mill, J, S. "On Liberty", in Wootton D. (ed.), *Modern Political Thought: Readings From Machiavelli to Nietzsche* (Cambridge: Hackett, 1996)
- Miller, J, R. *Lethal Legacy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 2004)
- Moberg, M. "Nation- building in Rojava: Participatory democracy amidst the Syrian civil war", *Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations* (2016) online at Imemo.ru, (accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2017)
- Moller Okin, S. *Justice Gender and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989)
- Mouffe, C. *On the political* (London: Routledge, 2005)
- Mulhall, S. and Swift, A. *Liberals and Communitarians*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)
- Murphy, M, C. MacIntyre's Political Philosophy, In Murphy, M, C. ed. *Alasdair MacIntyre* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003)



- Naess, A, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle Outline of an Ecosophy*, Translated by Rothenberg, D (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)
- Naess, A. "The Shallow and The Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary" in Sessions, G, (ed), *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Shambhala, 1995) pp. 151-155
- Naess, A. "Self Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in The World", in Sessions, G, (ed.), *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Shambhala, 1995) pp. 225-239
- Newell, P. *Globalization and the environment: Capitalism, ecology and power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012)
- Nichols, R, L. *Indians in the United States and Canada* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998)
- Nozick, R. *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003)
- Nussbaum M, C. *Women and Human development; the capabilities approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Paehlke, R, C. *Democracy's Dilemma: Environment, Social Equity, and the Global Economy* (London: The MIT Press, 2003)
- Paehlke, R, C. "Democracy, Bureaucracy, and Environmentalism", *Environmental Ethics* 10:4 (1988) pp. 291-308
- Plumwood, V. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- Preston, J. Neoliberal settler colonialism, Canada and the tar sands, *Race & Class*, 55:2, (2013) pp.42-59
- Rawls, J, A. *Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Rawls, J. "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", in, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, (Summer 1985)

- Rawls, J. *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)
- Raz, J. "Autonomy, Toleration and the Harm Principle", in, Mendus, S. (ed), *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
- Rootes, C. *The Green Challenge; The Development of Green Parties in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Rootes, C. "Environmental Movements and Green Parties in Western and Eastern Europe" in Redclift, M. and Woodgate, G. (eds), *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1997)
- Rootes, C. *Environmental Movements: Local, National and Global* (London: Frank Cass, 1999)
- Rosenblum, N, L. *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (London, Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Saed. From the October Revolution to Revolutionary Rojava: An Ecosocialist Reading, in *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 28:4, (2017) pp. 3-20
- Sale, K. *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000)
- Salleh, A. *Eco-sufficiency & global justice*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- Sandel, M, J. *Liberalism and its Critics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984)
- Sandel, M, J. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Sandel, M, J. *A New Politics of the Common Good* (Transcript online) BBC Radio 4 productions, Online at:  
  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kt7rg> (2009), (accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009)

- Sandel, M, J. "A New Citizenship", (Transcript online), Lecture 2: *A New Politics of the Common Good*, BBC Radio 4 productions. Online at:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00l59hf> (2009), (accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009)
- Sandel, M, J. "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self" in Schumaker, P. (ed.), *The Political Theory Reader* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
- Sandel, M. *What money can't buy: The moral limits of the markets* (London: Allen Lane, 2012)
- Sanders, L. "Against Deliberation", in *Political Theory*, 25:3 (1997) pp. 347-76
- Saward, M. Green Democracy, in Dobson, A, and Lucardie, P. (eds.), *The Politics of Nature: Explorations in Green Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 1993) pp. 63-80
- Saward, M. "Must Democrats be Environmentalists?", in Doherty, B. and de Geus, M. (eds), *Democracy and Green Political Thought: Sustainability, Rights and Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 1996) pp. 79-96
- Saward, M. "Green State/Democratic State", *Contemporary Politics* 4:4 (1998) pp. 345-356
- Shiva, V. "The Greening of the Global Reach", in *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order*, 53-60, (eds.) Brecher J., Childs, J, B., Cutler J. (Boston: South End Press, 1993)
- Singer, P. *Animal Liberation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002)
- Smith, A. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976)
- Smith, G. *Deliberative Democracy and the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2003)
- Smith, G. "Green Citizenship and the Social Economy", in *Environmental Politics* 4:2 (2005) pp. 273-289
- Sessions, G. *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Shambhala, 1995)
- Stephens, P, H, G. "Green Liberalisms: Nature, Agency and the Good", in *Environmental Politics* 10:3 (2001) pp. 1-22

- Stephens P, H, G. "Environmental Political Theory and the Liberal Tradition" (eds.) Gabrielson T. Hall C. Meyer, J, C. and Schlosberg, D. The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) pp. 57-71
- Stoljar, D. "Emotivism and Truth conditions", *Philosophical Studies* 70:1 (1993) pp. 81-101
- Swyngedouw, E. "Authoritarian governance, power, and the politics of rescaling", *Environment and Planning D: Society and space*, 18:1 (2000) pp.63-76.
- Swyngedouw, E. "The antinomies of the postpolitical city: in search of a democratic politics of environmental production", in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33:3 (2009) pp.601-620.
- Taylor, C. "Cross Purposes: The Liberal Communitarian Debate", in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, (ed.) Rosenblum, N, L. (London: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Taylor, C. *Sources of the Self; The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- Taylor, C. *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- The Social contract of Rojava, online at <http://www.kurdishinstitute.be/charter-of-the-social-contract/> (Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017)
- Torgerson, D. *The Promise of Green Politics: Environmentalism and the Public Sphere* (London: Duke University Press, 1999)
- Warren, K. "Taking Empirical Data Seriously", in Warren, K. Erkal, N. (eds.), *Ecofeminism: Women Culture Nature* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997)
- Walzer, M. *Spheres of Justice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995)
- Westman, C, N. Cautionary tales: making and breaking community in the oil sands region. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 38:2, (2003) pp.211-231

- Wissenburg, M. *Green Liberalism: The free and the green society* (London: UCL Press, 1998)
- Wissenburg, M. "Liberalism", in Dobson, A, Eckersley, R, (eds), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006) pp. 20-34
- Wissenburg, M. "Ecological Neutrality and Liberal Survivalism", *Analyse & Kritik*, 28:2 (2006b) pp. 125-145
- Witherspoon, S. "The Greening of Britain: Romance and Rationality" in Jowell, R., Curtice, J., Brook, L. and Ahrendts, D. (eds), *British Social Attitudes: the 11<sup>th</sup> report* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1994) pp. 107-39
- Yegen, M. "Armed Struggle to Peace Negotiations: Independent Kurdistan to Democratic Autonomy, or The PKK in Context", *Middle East Critique*, 25:4, (2016) pp.365-383
- Young, I, M. "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy", in Benhabib, S. (ed.), *Democracy and Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)
- Young, I, M. *Inclusion and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Žižek, S. *Welcome to the desert of the real!: five essays on September 11 and related dates* (London: Verso, 2002)